1985 Festival of American Folklife

Smithsonian Institution
National Park Service

Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, Louisiana Folklife Program

Photo by Al Godoy,

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Laissez le Bon Temps Rouler*

by Robert McC. Adams, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution

Consider the Festival a good time. The senses delight in the food, music, craft and dance that come from India, Louisiana and from several other of the world's vibrant traditional cultures. But broaden the view and you can see also that the Festival is a living demonstration of how context can be so very important in understanding cultural artifacts and practices.

The Indian program at this year's Festival, for example, presents singers, acrobats, dancers and other performers in a context in which they often perform — a holiday fair, or *melā*. The economic and religious activities that encompass the performances allow us to see the artistic traditions as part of this larger institution. Each art form might stand on its own, with its distinctive aesthetic style and vocabulary of cultural meanings. But in the context of one another and of the special space created by buyers, sellers and religious devotees, the arts also make a larger statement about the complex and mutually reinforcing relationships between artistic performance, economic trade and religious belief.

Based on extensive scholarly research, anthropologists, folklorists, designers and craftspeople, both Indian and American, have re-created a mela and invite your participation in its flow of events. Participation makes us aware that we ourselves are part of the context of the performances and, perhaps, through our participation we may gain some idea of the role we might play as an audience, were we in India. Participation is a venerable concept in the tradition of folklore and anthropology, from Levy-Bruhl's early observation about the merging in certain symbolic systems of categories of self and other, of sacred and secular, to Malinowski's methodological insight that cultural learning comes through participating and observing, and to Redfield's understanding that acolytes in religious ritual participate in maintaining the structure of the world envisioned in their belief. All of these forms of participation are to be found at the mela. I urge you to entertain them and be entertained by them.

Events in the Louisiana program at the festival speak to the context created by the unique history and geography of that part of our continent, where rich forms of creolization, or cultural mixture, have flourished. Creative blending of cultural aesthetics and repertoires has occurred in other places in our country but in few places to the acknowledged extent and with the public vitality of the traditional cultures of Louisiana. To hear the variety of musical styles, to see the varied dance and craft traditions — and to taste the renowned foods of the region should all lead one to reflect on the social and environmental conditions that brought Africans, Native Americans, Anglo Americans, French, Spanish and other groups together in ways that led to

the rich mixtures of language and culture distinctive of "The Creole State."

Cultural Conservation — a Festival exhibition area that explores questions about maintaining the world's cultural environment in much the same way that we have learned to think about the natural environment — shows the importance of context in yet another arena of understanding. Traditional cultures live within larger contexts of national and sometimes international political, economic and cultural institutions. Sometimes the larger institutions can assist a traditional culture to conserve and to adapt its distinctive identity, ethos and aesthetic expression on its own terms, within the context of its own experience. The Smithsonian, for example, through this Festival and other programs, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress have a continuing interest in the conservation of traditional cultures. Most often, however, the context created by larger institutions is more ambiguous and poses challenges to the continued vitality of traditional cultures. This wider context is explored in the Cultural Conservation program, and performers and craftspersons demonstrate the traditions they and others work to conserve.

But these thoughts about context and understanding are not meant to lessen your enjoyment of the Festival. Rather they are meant to offer a key to a richer experience of the performances and artifacts presented here. For it seems to me a profoundly good time when we can both see and appreciate the artistry, humanity and historical specificity of these cultural traditions in contexts which help reveal their meaning.

*(Cajun French for "Let the Good Times Roll")

A Partnership that Persists

by William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, National Park Service

The National Park Service proudly welcomes you to the National Mall for the 1985 Festival of American Folklife. Every year since 1967, two great federal agencies — The National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution — have pooled their resources to focus attention on particular facets of this country's rich folklife. From communities throughout the nation, Festival participants have brought to the nation's Capital their special crafts, songs and stories as cultural mirrors of their everyday life and work.

The combined institutional and community talents provide an in-depth look at our cultural diversity and its roots, while suggesting how it should be conserved for future generations of Americans. We present it to you in the form of a national Festival for all ages to enjoy at their leisure against a backdrop of the nation's most magnificent museums, public monuments and memorials.

Here in the nation's Capital and throughout a total of 334 areas in the National Park System across the country, the National Park Service works to accommodate its citizens' leisure time use of parks while safeguarding our greatest natural and cultural resources for the future. America's National Park System has served as a model internationally, helping to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the natural world and our human response to it.

Parks are often called outdoor museums for the stimulation they offer the senses. This label in fact suggests the close affiliation between the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution. Our partnership persists in the belief that each generation wants to learn and share in the rich and diverse legacy of America's great natural and cultural heritage.

Please enjoy your visit to this year's Festival and include some time for the other parks that contribute so much to the beauty of the nation's Capital.

Welcome to the Festival

by Diana Parker, Festival Director

Since the Festival of American Folklife first began in 1967, more than 10,000 generous people have traveled to Washington to share with us their wisdom and talent. In explaining and demonstrating their skills as singers, dancers, musicians, cooks, artisans, storytellers, and workers, they have represented legions more in their home communities. Because of the time and knowledge they have shared with us, our lives have been enriched, while our cultural understanding of the aesthetic variety in this and other nations has been broadened. Meanwhile, the Smithsonian's archive of folklife research and programming experience grows incrementally each year. There is much still to be learned, and each participant's story adds to our understanding of the mosaic of folk culture.

Often our festival participants have told us of their struggle to maintain traditions in the face of overwhelming odds. Each year brings another person to inform us, "I am the last who knows how to do this the old way." For this reason we view conservation of culture as an issue equal in urgency to the conservation of our natural resources, for the pluralism we reflect at each year's Festival would be terrible to lose.

The Smithsonian Institution is not the only organization concerned with cultural conservation. The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress has consistently contributed on a national scale to research and preservation of traditional culture. Numerous state and local programs are also hard at work in similar efforts and have made notable contributions. This year, as the National Endowment for the Arts celebrates its 20th anniversary, we are especially aware of the immense contributions of its Folk Arts Program. Grants and National Heritage Fellowships administered by the Program have provided much-needed support to community efforts in the preservation of tradition-based cultures. We congratulate our colleague, Folk Arts Program Director Bess Lomax Hawes, and her able staff on their consistently superior performance.

This year more than two hundred participants will again come to Washington in the spirit of joy and sharing in a great celebration of our cultural diversity. We urge you to take part in the events and ask questions of the participants, for they have much to teach us all.

The Creole State: An Introduction to Louisiana Traditional Culture

by Nicholas R. Spitzer

Nicholas Spitzer has directed the Louisiana Folklife Program in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism since 1978. He has carried out ethnographic research for the Jean Lafitte National Park, directed a film on zydeco music, recorded Louisiana traditional music extensively, and helped to found the Louisiana Folklife Festival and Baton Rouge Blues Festival. Spitzer is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Texas.

Funding for the Louisiana program has been provided by the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism through the Louisiana Office of Tourism and private donations through the Louisiana Heritage Foundation.

To outsiders Louisiana conjures up a myriad of images: lazy bayous and political cockfights, alligator-laden swamps and streets choked with Mardi Gras revelers; Cajun waltzes and voodoo dolls; decaying log "dogtrot" houses and flood-rusted mobile homes. Beneath the stereotypes is a state steeped in a variety of traditions grappling with the attractions of the cultural and economic mainstream. Louisiana's citizens are aware of the complex mixture of tradition and change in a state that is as much Sunbelt suburban as it is pioneer, frontier, plantation, farmstead, fisherman's camp or New Orleans neighborhood.

The richness of Louisiana folk traditions, from old-time jazz and Cajun music to Creole food and north Louisiana craftsmen, is increasingly recognized as valuable to the economic and cultural future of the state. Development that brings with it environmental problems and adverse effects to the traditional communities and landscape is now often questioned.

The Louisiana program at the Festival of American Folklife presents the best of traditional life to show how folk cultural resources can help sustain the state in the future if properly encouraged. Previous festivals have shown Louisiana folk culture primarily in terms of Cajun and New Orleans musical traditions. This year's Festival attempts to correct this imbalance by presenting the traditions of the entire state: south Louisiana, north Louisiana, the Florida Parishes and New Orleans (see map).

Predominantly Catholic and French, south Louisiana has been described as "South of the South." The region's Mediterranean-African-Caribbean roots and plantation past make it and New Orleans as much akin to societies in the Spanish and French West Indies as the American South. Rural south Louisiana is dominated by the Acadians, or Cajuns, who came from what is now Nova Scotia as *petit habitants* (small farmers) in the late 18th century. Over time, the Cajuns have absorbed and been affected by a wide array of cultures in the area: Spanish, German, Italian, Anglo, Native American, Afro-French, Afro-American and Slavonian. South Louisiana's distinctive foodways (gumbo, jambalaya, crawfish *etouffee*), musics (Cajun and zydeco), material culture (Creole cottages, shotgun houses, *pirogues* and *bateaux*), ritual and festival practices (folk Catholicism, home altars, *boucheries*, Mardi Gras) and languages (Cajun and Creole French, Spanish, Dalmatian and Indian languages) reflect a diversity of culture unified in one region.

Some south Louisiana groups are largely independent of Cajun cultural influences. For example, Spanish-speaking Isleños of St. Bernard Parish descended from Canary Islanders who arrived contemporaneously with Acadians. Isleños pride themselves as great duck

"Le grand chemin," sacred ground in south Louisiana. A roadside station of the cross marks the entrance to the Pine-Oak Alley near St. Martinville. The Alley is a huge planting of trees in the form of a cross used for weddings in the 19th century. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program.

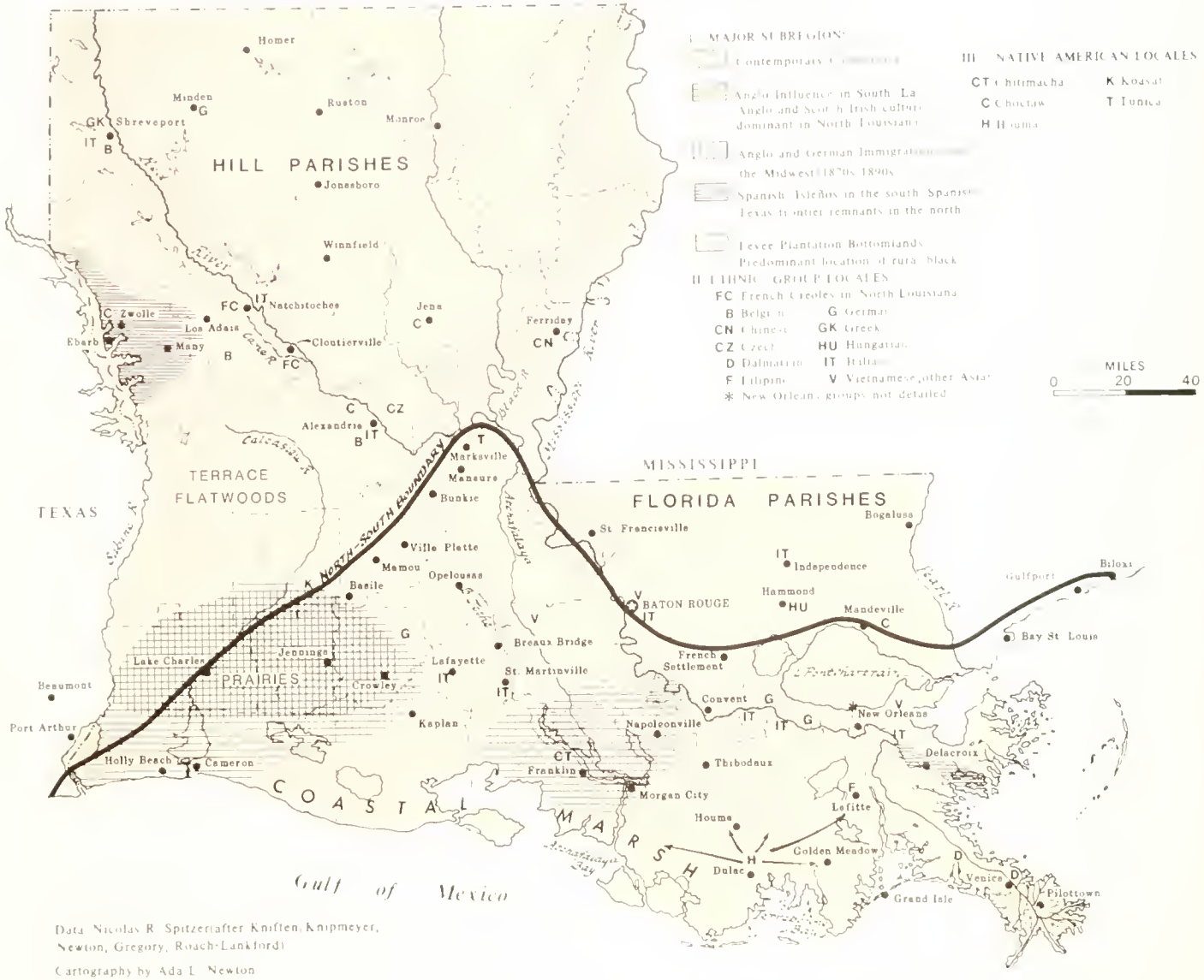
hunters, fishermen and trappers, and they continue to cook the Spanish dish *caldo* and sing complex story songs, called *decimas*, about the exploits of the cruel knight from the Middle Ages, or the lazy fisherman in today's coastal town of Delacroix.

Indian people, who were in the region before all others, have made their contributions to wooden boat styles, folk medicine and other traditions now associated with south Louisiana as a whole. While the Houma tribe conserves aspects of a 19th-century French folk culture, the Coushatta and Chitimacha have maintained greater separation from Cajun culture as evidenced by their native language retention and basketry traditions.

Nineteenth and 20th-century immigration to south Louisiana included fishermen from the Dalmation coast of Yugoslavia, who settled in coastal Plaquemines Parish, where they introduced the oyster industry. Italians arrived in the same era, many as sharecroppers on post-Civil War plantations. Since then they have developed truck farming and rural food distribution in Louisiana while playing an active role in the urban cultures of New Orleans and elsewhere.

The mingling of all these peoples in south Louisiana has been likened to the ingredients in gumbo -- named after an African word for okra -- which contribute to a total taste while retaining distinctive ethnic "flavors." Less metaphorically, the terms "Creole" and "creolization" have been used to describe the region's cultural blending

LOUISIANA FOLK REGIONS



Data: Nicolas R. Spitzer after Kniffen, Knipmeyer, Newton, Gregory, Roach-Lankford

Cartography by Ada L. Newton

and distinctiveness. Creole, from the Portuguese *crioulo* ("native to a region"), originally referred to the French/Spanish colonial population in south Louisiana and the Caribbean region. Prior to the Civil War, the word also came to refer to the *gens de couleur libre* (free men of color) of Afro-European descent. Today the term has a variety of meanings but usually refers to people of mixed African, French, Spanish and Indian heritage in southwest Louisiana. However, in southeast Louisiana plantation regions and in New Orleans, Creole is sometimes associated with exclusively European ancestry and culture. Linguists apply the term to the Afro-French language called Creole found in the French West Indies as well as in French plantation areas of south Louisiana.

The most concentrated creolization of cultures has occurred in New Orleans, which is simultaneously a southern city near the mouth of the Mississippi and a Gulf Coast/Caribbean port. "The Crescent City" was the nation's largest port prior to the Civil War, when cotton was floated on barges and boats down river and beyond to British and American fabric mills. The mingling of people in New Orleans has

led to a city of many accents, the most pronounced of which is called the "Yat" accent of the Irish Channel section and the city's Ninth Ward, as in the expression "Where y'at?" The intense Afro-European contact that shaped New Orleans culture led to the birth of jazz, as former slaves merged Afro-Caribbean rhythms and street performance with European instrumental traditions of the cotillion, the parlor and the military parade. New Orleans cuisine and architecture also reflect a merging of aesthetics, as highly seasoned soul food and fancy Creole sauces are paralleled by elevated West Indian-style shotgun houses elaborately trimmed and French cottages with Norman rooflines and shaded sun porches. Native New Orleanians, though dominantly Catholic, are ethnically diverse. Yet a city-wide identity based on this diversity and the area's difference from other urban centers in America persists. To most visitors the sights, sounds and smells of New Orleans neighborhoods as well as the annual Mardi Gras speak more of Port-au-Prince and Lima than of Atlanta and Nashville. The preponderance of saints days festivities, carnival and other parades reinforces this impression.

In contrast to south Louisiana and New Orleans, Protestant north Louisiana is historically and culturally part of the upland and riverine American South. North Louisiana's mainly rural folk landscape was shaped by contact between American Indian and Anglo- and Afro-Americans, in pioneer, plantation, sharecropping and farmstead settings among the river bottomlands, piney woods and hills of the region. In this relatively isolated and more Anglo-influenced part of the state, there is less overlapping of cultural groups than in south Louisiana, and contrasts within the region are more prominent (see map). Creoles of Color are found in the Cane River area below Natchitoches, where some of them in fact once owned plantations. Spanish-speakers of Choctaw-Anglo descent live in the old "no man's land" to the west of Natchitoches on the Texas/Louisiana border. Some live in log houses, cook tamales and practice a folk Catholicism in contrast to their Anglo Baptist neighbors. There are also Italians, Hungarians, Czechs and Greeks throughout north Louisiana and its adjacent Florida Parishes. The overall Anglo tone of the region has been likened to a quilt: like the folk landscape of north Louisiana, the

Marie Billiot Dean, a Houma Indian basket weaver from Dulac, Terrebonne Parish, with palmetto drying in her backyard. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

Dancing in a black Creole club in Cecilia, Louisiana, to the zydeco music of Claude Duffy and his Fire Band. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

Crawfisherman [illegible] Barras of [illegible] checks his traps. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

Suggested reading

Conrad, Glen, ed. *The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture*. Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana Press, 1978.

Cooke, John, ed. *Perspectives on Ethnicity in New Orleans 1978-1983*. New Orleans: The Committee on Ethnicity in New Orleans.

Roach Lankford, Susan. *Gifts From the Hills: North Central Louisiana Folklife Traditions*. Ruston: Louisiana Tech Art Gallery, 1984.

Spitzer, Nicholas R., ed. *Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana Folklife Program, 1985.

Suggested recordings

Louisiana Cajun Music, vols. 1 through 8 (Old Timey Records).

Louisiana Folklife Recording Series, LP's 001-004 (Louisiana Folklife Program).

Music of New Orleans, vols. 1 through 5 (Folkways).

Zodico: Louisiana Creole Music (Rounder Records 6009).

Suggested films

Always For Pleasure, by Les Blank, 58 min., color sound, Flower Films, El Cerrito, California.

Dedans la Sud de la Louisiane, by Jean Pierre Bruneau, 60 min., color sound, Bayou Films, Cut Off, Louisiana.

Gumbo: The Mysteries of Cajun and Creole Cooking, by Steve Duplantier and Marc Porter, Center for Gulf South History and Culture, Abita Springs, Louisiana.

Something Nobody Else Has: The Story of Turtle Trapping in Louisiana, by Lee Aber and Rick Luhann, 29 min., color video, Hawksbill Productions, Shreveport, Louisiana.

Zydeco: Creole Music and Culture in Rural Louisiana, by Nick Spitzer and Steve Duplantier, 56 min., color video, Center for Gulf South History and Culture, Abita Springs, Louisiana.

region is clearly patterned but composed of many separate colored and textured pieces.

With the exception of the Natchitoches–Cane River area, the term Creole has not been used historically to describe north Louisiana's culture. However, because this part of Louisiana is tied economically and politically to the French southern part of the state, an emerging creolization between these regions has been on-going since statehood in 1812. The mixing is at its strongest in the cultural border areas, where north Louisianians add gumbo to their foodways and Cajuns sing country music in French.

Perhaps because Louisiana as a whole still speaks with diverse and contrasting voices of tradition, the state is just beginning to recognize and support programs that conserve and promote its folk cultures. This year the state legislature in Baton Rouge is considering first time funding for the Louisiana Folklife Program. The efforts of the Smithsonian Institution and other groups over the last 20 years through fieldwork, sound recordings and festival presentation have done much to assist the conservation and renaissance of Cajun culture. Those presenting New Orleans culture have long emphasized tourist promotion but with less attention to the conservation of what some have called "the cultural wetlands" of the city, that is, its root traditions and communities. The cultures of the Florida Parishes and north Louisiana have remained virtually ignored until quite recently. It is hoped that the celebratory mingling of *all* the regions and cultures of Louisiana at the 1985 Festival of American Folklife will bring them their due applause that can be heard back home.

Louisiana's Traditional Foodways

by Charlotte Paige Gutierrez

Charlotte Paige Gutierrez received her doctorate in anthropology from the University of North Carolina. Her research has concentrated on Cajun foodways. In addition to publishing several articles on traditional foodways, she has served as an anthropologist with her native city of Biloxi, Mississippi.

This article is condensed from *Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State* (forthcoming, 1985).

Louisiana is the home of three regional culinary traditions: the Cajun foodways of rural south Louisiana, the Creole foodways of urban New Orleans and its environs, and the Anglo-Southern foodways of rural north Louisiana.

New Orleans food — commonly called "Creole" — is a mirror of the city's cultural complexity. Originally part of France's colonial empire, New Orleans is now a multi-ethnic city in which ethnic identity is often overridden by a pan-city identity, a distinctively New Orleans sense of place. Harnett Kane, a local author, describes the city's cuisine and its social heritage:

> Like a language or an art, a living cuisine borrows, assimilates, expands. With a population so multilingual, Creole cooking has been modified with the years. A Frenchman has married an Italian girl; some Jugoslavs move into the French section; a German cousin comes to live with the Creole family — and each adds something.
>
> Take my family as an example. Though it is of Irish descent, the present generation grew up on gumbo and *cafe au lait*. We like jambalaya as thoroughly as any Creoles do, but we also enjoy Italian stuffed artichokes, as well as an emphatic crab mixture suggested by a Dalmatian friend from the lower Delta. Since one family branch is German, we have long appreciated pot roast and noodles; yet in the main, no matter what goes onto the family stove, it emerges with a strong French-Spanish seasoning. (1949:317)

Black and Creole cooks, Choctaw Indian herb merchants, European-trained gourmet chefs, and exotic food importers have all had their impact on "The Crescent City's" foodways. Complex culinary blending and borrowing have been common in New Orleans since colonial times, when Spanish, African and Indian influences combined with environmental necessity to transform Old World French *bouillabaisse* into Creole gumbo (Fiebleman, 1971:15). Some ethnic foods have become so widespread that they have become as much the property of the city as a whole as of the original groups: Italian *muffulettas* are one example; red beans and rice — probably a legacy of New Orleans' Caribbean connection — another; and "Creole" mustard of German heritage yet another.

To an outsider, the urban Creole cuisine of New Orleans and the rural Cajun cuisine of the Acadiana parishes of south Louisiana are difficult to distinguish from one another. Both draw heavily on the products of local fields, forests, swamps and coastal waters (seafood, crawfish, game); both use rice as a staple and are highly seasoned; and both offer certain well-known dishes, such as gumbo, jambalaya

Le boucherie is a tradition maintained by French-speaking Cajuns. Neighbors share in the labors of the boucherie: boiling water, killing and cleaning the hog, preparation of *le grese* (lard) and *les gratons* (cracklings). At the end of the boucherie, those who participated take home shares of *boudin* (spicy sausage made from pork and rice) and various cuts of the slaughtered animal. Photo courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

and beans-and-rice. However, because of stylistic differences, a native Louisianian can tell the difference between, for example, a spicy-hot, dark-brown Cajun prairie gumbo and a more delicate New Orleans variety.

In general, rural Cajun cooking reflects a preference for hot peppers; heavily seasoned foods; long cooked, one pot dishes served with rice; smothered, seasoned vegetables; and dark roast coffee, which is different from the coffee and chicory of New Orleans. However, within Cajun country, the variety of dishes is great, and each item bears a regional identity: *grillades* (smothered beef in seasoned gravy) on the prairies, *tasso* (smoked meat used as seasoning) in the Opelousas area, barbecued shrimp in Terrebonne Parish, *andouille* (a sausage) on the old "German Coast" of the Mississippi River above New Orleans, and crawfish — even more popular in Cajun Louisiana than in New Orleans.

In Cajun Louisiana there is a tendency to turn any event into a food-oriented affair. Festivals feature food, many being centered around a particular local specialty, such as rice, crawfish, *boudin* sausage, oysters, jambalaya, gumbo, or *cochon de lait* (roast suckling pig). Weddings, business meetings, fundraisers and club meetings provide occasions for community meals, and in south Louisiana their preparation is a status job often held by males, many of them locally famous for their culinary skills.

North Louisiana foodways have not received the attention given to Cajun and Creole cooking, as journalists and scholars have been

Alvia Houck of Hico builds fire with hickory and sassafrass wood to smoke homemade sausage and hams Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

Mary Lou Gunn of Ruston shells peas on her back porch Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

more intrigued with the "exotic" south Louisiana cuisine. North Louisiana foodways in general reflect their common bond with the American South (Roach Lankford, 1984), and the emphasis on pork and corn products, greens, yams, peas, game, freshwater fish (especially catfish) and prize winning pies and cakes is true to its southern heritage. Roach Lankford points out that summer vegetables are today a mainstay of north Louisiana cooking, with many varieties grown locally. The area is also noted for its fine barbecue, church suppers, family reunions and food preparation contests at local fairs.

Specific traditional foodways often serve as an ethnic or regional boundary marker. For example, a south Louisianian is likely to know how to catch, cook and eat crawfish, while people from outside the region are often mystified or even repulsed by these activities. In the past, outsiders associated the eating of crawfish with the poor, illiterate, swamp-dwelling Cajun, who was ridiculed for eating the inexpensive and supposedly inedible, unsanitary "mudbug." But in recent years, as south Louisiana has experienced an economic boom, Cajuns have a renewed ethnic pride, and the lowly crawfish has become an accepted and even expensive, fashionable food as well as a symbol of Cajuns. Now it is the newcomer to the region who is embarrassed by his inability to do something as "simple" as peeling and eating his share at a backyard crawfish boil (Gutierrez, 1983).

As in other areas of folklife, modern influences have affected Louisiana's traditional foodways. The advent of electricity and refrigeration has removed the need for quickly distributing and consuming freshly killed meat; consequently, community hog-killings (*boucheries* in south Louisiana) have become relatively rare. Store-bought bread has replaced homemade bread for all but the most traditional, gourmet, or natural-foods-oriented cooks. Modern markets and roads, as well as larger incomes, have made the purchase of fresh or packaged produce more convenient and economical for the working family, so the skills necessary for raising and preserving one's own produce are often more a hobby than a necessity. Few are the Louisianians who still grind their own corn, milk their own cows, or live exclusively on what they can hunt, catch, gather and grow. Increasing literacy and the offerings of radio and television have expanded the food horizons of the curious: a Winnfield or Abbeville housewife may now serve her family Chinese stir-fried vegetables or East Indian curry. Meanwhile, in favor of healthier practices, modern nutritionists attempt to persuade Louisianians to forego certain traditional foodways, such as the heavy use of fats or over-cooking nutritionally fragile vegetables.

Although modern technology and communication have led to the demise of many traditional foodways, they have also been enlisted as aids in the continuation of tradition. Instead of using the old-fashioned method of piercing meat and stuffing the holes with chopped garlic, onions and pepper to season it, some Cajun cooks now inject its veins with liquefied pepper and other ingredients delivered through a veterinarian's hypodermic needle. Which way is better is a matter of opinion, both result in the same regionally-defined dish. Appliance stores throughout the state offer lessons in preparing regional foods in microwave ovens, while freezers and other modern preservation conveniences have practically ended the old seasonal cycle of food availability. Crawfish farming promises to make the spring crawfish boil a year-round event, and even if an angler has no luck at the fishing hole, catfish farming has made his catch readily available at the grocery store.

Mary Gray packs basket with huckleberry cobbler, butter beans and fried chicken for a community gathering. Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

Contest consumption of crawfish and other foods is a common event at south Louisiana festivals like the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival. Photo courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

Ironically, it is the awareness of the outside world and interaction with it that has spurred many Louisianians to preserve some of their folk traditions, including their foodways. The revived interest in folk and ethnic heritage which swept the nation in the 1960s and 1970s has been felt in Louisiana, and its citizens are increasingly aware of the value of their traditional culture. The interest shown by sympathetic outsiders — scholars, journalists, tourists — is a further source of pride in local heritage. Restaurants feature traditional foods, and the number of regional cookbooks and festivals continues to grow. The cooks participating in the Smithsonian Institution's folklife festival are but one example of Louisianians' pleasure in sharing their food traditions with the rest of the world.

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Gutierrez, C. Paige. "Foodways and Cajun Identity." Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1983.

Kane, Harnett T. *Queen New Orleans: City by the River*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1949.

The Picayune's Creole Cook Book. New York: Dover Publications, 1971.

Roach Lankford, Susan, ed. *Gifts from the Hills: North Central Louisiana Folk Traditions*. Ruston: North Louisiana Tech Art Gallery, Louisiana Tech University, 1984.

Suggested films

Gumbo: The Mysteries of Creole and Cajun Cuisine, by Steve Duplantier. 28 min. color sound. Center for Gulf South History and Culture, Abita Springs, Louisiana.

Vivre Pour Manger, by Steve Duplantier. 28 min. color sound. Center for Gulf South History and Culture, Abita Springs, Louisiana.

Florida Parishes

by Joel Gardner

Joel Gardner is Assistant Director of the Louisiana Division of the Arts. Previously he directed the Florida Parishes Folklife Survey under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has been an oral historian for nearly 15 years and holds degrees from Tulane University and the University of California, Los Angeles.

This article is based on the Florida Parishes Folklife Survey, conducted in 1983-84, the results of which will appear in *Folklife in the Florida Parishes*, scheduled for publication this fall.

A parish is Louisiana's equivalent to a county; eight of them are collectively referred to as the "Florida Parishes." East and West Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington. They are bounded by the state of Mississippi to the north and east, by the Mississippi River to the west, and by Bayou Manchac and Lake Pontchartrain to the south (see map). In colonial days, they fell within the Spanish Territory of West Florida, and for a few months in 1910, before annexation into the United States, they were the Republic of West Florida, hence their present designation, Florida Parishes.

The Florida Parishes region encapsulates the diversity of the state as a whole. Its residents are Scotch-Irish-English and Afro-American, French and Creole, Italian and Eastern European. Unlike the rest of south Louisiana, however, the Florida Parishes have seen very little creolization; rather, the traditions and ethnicity of its people have remained more discrete. The folk landscape of the parishes today includes plantation homes, piney woods, farmsteads, bayou fishing camps, Creole cottages and Sunbelt subdivisions. Considering the suburban infringement of the metropolitan Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas, the region is remarkably rich in rural traditional culture.

The major migration to the Florida Parishes was by British Americans in the 19th century. Tidewater English from Virginia and the Carolinas settled the cotton plantations of the Felicianas, and Scotch-Irish moved into the piney woods of Washington, St. Helena, and Tangipahoa by way of the mid south areas of Georgia and Mississippi.

In front of the Anglo planters and farmers moved the Acolapissa, the major Native American group of the presettlement era — some now mixed with the Houmas in the Terrebonne Parish to the southwest — and the Choctaw, a few of whom remain along the bayous of the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Behind the planters came the African slaves, who later became sharecroppers when the postbellum cotton economy dwindled. In the meantime, French, Spanish and German settlers moved in from New Orleans to the south to fish and hunt around the lake and rivers, as did the Creoles of Color (free men of color), who made homes in St. Tammany Parish and intermixed with the Europeans and the Indians.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the last to arrive were Italians — nearly all of them Sicilians — and Hungarians. Each group formed a community, in Tangipahoa and Livingston parishes respectively, that remains culturally cohesive today (see map).

The extent to which all these ethnic groups have maintained customs from generation to generation has depended on the economic or

social isolation chosen by or forced upon the group. Thus Blacks, restricted from integration into the social structure of the dominant class, maintain traditions of subsistence and sustenance, worship and recreation that are characteristic of the deep South. Their domestic folkways, such as food gathering and preparation, are those practiced by their forebears. For example, for the older generation of Blacks today, quilting is an aesthetic and social activity, learned from parents and grandparents. (By contrast, Anglo quilters have tended to adopt styles and patterns from crafts books and national magazines rather than from oral tradition.) Music plays a pervasive role for the Blacks of the Florida Parishes, from the gospel music sung in church every Sunday to the blues played at backyard barbecues and in clubs. Baton Rouge has recently resurfaced as a center of the blues; the home of such nationally known performers as the late Robert Pete Williams and Slim Harpo now boasts several active blues nightclubs and a style of playing that imparts an urban flavor to a music with country roots. The annual River City Blues Festival in April features bluesmen such as Henry Gray, Silas Hogan, Guitar Kelley and Tabby Thomas.

Like the Blacks, many piney woods Scotch-Irish retain an economic isolation from Sunbelt growth. In piney woods areas in the northern Florida Parishes, where logging once served as an industry and a way of life, many remain tied to small farms. Most maintain traditional methods of food gathering and preparation, and some practice handcrafting farm implements, such as axe and hammer handles. The traditional secular music of Florida Parishes Anglos is found from Walker to Bogalusa at public liquor-free clubs, such as the Old South Jamboree and the Catfish Hayloft. Gospel music is equally rich but more pri-

Irene and Curt Blackwell of Covington, St Tammany Parish, play fiddlesticks and fiddle
Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

The feeding of the Saints of the Holy family is re-enacted on St. Joseph's Day in Baton Rouge by the Stablitez/Landry family. Photo by Maida Bergeron, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

vately performed at church functions. Fiddling traditions persist, and some performers still use fiddlesticks for dance pieces, such as "Sawyer Man" and "Pa Didn't Raise No Cotton and Corn."

The traditions of the piney woods area of the Florida Parishes are typically the Upland South culture that dominates north Louisiana. By contrast, the northshore of Lake Pontchartrain is home to a creolized mix of people and customs, comparable to that found throughout the south of the state. Intermingled descendants of Spanish, French and Germans fish and hunt, while creating the tools of their occupation, as families such as Quaves (from Cuevas), Maranges, and Glockners have all adapted their heritage to their surroundings. Lake Pontchartrain has always provided them an abundance of seafood, so fishing has played an important part in Northshore lifestyle. The implements of shrimping and crabbing and sometimes even the tools used to stitch the nets are made by hand.

In Bayou Lacombe, just east of Mandeville, French, Creoles of Color and Choctaws have intermarried over the years. Their most striking tradition is the celebration of All Saints' Day, *Toussaint*, which includes blessing the dead by lighting candles around each gravesite in Lacombe cemeteries. At these rituals, Creole speaking worshippers with French surnames gather to pay homage to their earliest French ancestors as well as their most recently departed relatives.

The Sicilians of Tangipahoa and East Baton Rouge Parishes, along with those in New Orleans and north Louisiana, observe St. Joseph's Day. The ancestors of most Italians in the Florida Parishes first worked the sugar fields across the Mississippi or the docks in New Orleans, then moved to the Hammond area where they bought small straw

French-speaking Choctaw, Leon Laurent of Mandeville, sets a bird trap in his backyard. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

berry farms. For years the town of Independence was nearly all Sicilian, although today the population is somewhat more heterogeneous. Still, the town focuses on its Sicilian heritage with an Italian festival in April and St. Joseph's Day in March, the latter offering gratitude to this saint for the bounty of the earth. Some families build home altars and invite their neighbors; other worshippers construct an altar at the church and provide a meal for all to share. Following the public display of the altar, a procession honoring St. Joseph winds through town. A smaller percentage of Italian-Americans in Baton Rouge are of Sicilian origin, yet St. Joseph's Day is still the most important Italian-American holiday in that city. The Grandsons of Italy, a fraternal organization, after building an altar that fills the wall of St. Anthony's School gymnasium, feed some 4,000 members of the larger community.

About 30 miles southeast of Independence, the residents of Hungarian Settlement continue the traditions of another European ethnic group. Foodways and dance are Hungarian customs that have resisted assimilation. For example, cabbage rolls are ubiquitous at celebrations, traditional Hungarian songs and dances are still performed and Old World costumes are still made and passed on by men and women.

In the Florida Parishes today, as in the rest of Louisiana, many of the traditions practiced for centuries risk being eclipsed by the spread of the Sunbelt lifestyle. Revivalists learn their crafts from magazines and call themselves folk artists; young people play rock-and-roll instead of blues or bluegrass. Each year, Lake Pontchartrain, flooded with river water to protect low-lying New Orleans, loses more of its former bounty of seafood. Still, an increasing awareness of cultural continuity, especially linked to environmental protection, should assure the survival of the traditional ways of life in the Florida Parishes.

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Suggested recordings

Louisiana Blues. (Arhoolie Records 1054)

Bayou Bluegrass. (Arhoolie Records 5010)

Louisiana Folk Boats

by Malcolm Comeaux

Malcolm Comeaux received his Ph.D. in geography from Louisiana State University in 1969. He is currently a professor of geography at Arizona State University in Tempe. He has conducted extensive field research on the development of fishing systems in inland waters, particularly in the Mississippi River System and in the Atchafalaya Swamp of Louisiana.

Folk boats are those small craft made by their users or by local boatbuilders who learned their construction techniques from an older generation. Hundreds of folk boats are built each year without blueprints or plans in backyards and small boatyards scattered throughout south Louisiana, where this tradition remains an important part of everyday life. It is not a folk tradition that depends upon sales to tourists; rather it survives simply because many require small boats for their livelihood.

Boats are found throughout the state, although in north Louisiana there was never a strong folk boat tradition, for the area was settled by Anglo southerners who had little need for boats. In south Louisiana, however, where there was always a close relationship between man and water, boat traditions survive because the craft are needed to exploit marine environments. Coastal regions, as well as lakes, bayous and swamps, are rich in resources, producing fish, crawfish, frogs, fur-bearing animals, Spanish moss, crabs, shrimp, alligators, and the like. To harvest these resources, boats are needed — not just any boats, but

Plank *pirogue* used in Atchafalaya Basin
Photo courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

Building a Lafitte skiff in the backyard of a south Louisiana home. Photo by Malcolm Comeaux

ones designed to fit various ecological conditions and accomplish specific chores.

Folk boats of Louisiana are not static and unchanging in style and form, for they are part of a living cultural system. While folk boats of Louisiana evolved essentially to accomplish particular tasks, they also reflect technological changes in society.

The Pirogue

The craft usually associated with Louisiana is the pirogue, a small, narrow, flat-bottomed boat pointed on each end. Indians were the first to build dugout pirogues, but theirs were comparatively bulky, heavy and unstreamlined, as fire was used to fell the tree and hollow the log. With metal tools and a different approach to watercraft, the French in Louisiana adapted the Indian boat. In contrast to Indians, who left intact the outer shape of the log, the French began pirogues by carefully shaping this outer side with axes, planes and draw knives. After the outer hull was finished, the inner part of the log was hollowed out with foot and hand adzes, and auger holes were drilled through the hull to check thinness, which were later plugged. The resulting pirogues were not only more stable than the Indian variety; they were also lighter and thus easier to paddle and portage.

The dugout pirogue continued to be built in large numbers into the 20th century as a craft ideally suited for use in swamps. Logging led to the demise of dugout pirogues, because cypress, the major wood for dugouts, was mostly logged out by the early 1930s. The logging industry, however, did provide quality cypress boards from which "plank pirogues" were made. In shape and function, these craft greatly resemble the earlier dugout pirogues from which they evolved. Today, plank pirogues are usually made of marine plywood. Except for the changes in construction techniques, the pirogue has changed little in shape and use in the last 250 years.

The *joug* on a skiff allows a boater to stand while towing. Photo by Malcolm Comeaux

The Skiff

Another folk boat of Louisiana is the skiff (*esquif* in French), at one time found throughout the Mississippi River system. An ancient boat type, it was undoubtedly brought to America by the earliest European settlers. The main advantage of the skiff is that it is easily rowed. One unique feature of skiffs in south Louisiana is a *joug* that elevates and extends the tholepins (the pins against which the oar is pressed when rowing) beyond the sides of the boat, allowing the user to stand and face forward while rowing. This rowing position — unusual for America — was introduced from southern Europe, where it is still sometimes seen (e.g., as used by gondoliers in Venice). The traditional skiff is rarely seen in Louisiana today, as it is not well suited to carry either an outboard or inboard engine.

Barges and Flatboats

Broad, oblong and flatbottomed barges have long been used in inland waters. In the early 1800s, large barges were commonly used to carry goods from the Upper Ohio to New Orleans, and smaller versions of the same are still made and used in Louisiana, either to transport heavy and awkward loads or as a base on which to build a houseboat.

Several folk boats in the "flatboat family" evolved from the barge. The earliest flatboats (called *chaland* in south Louisiana and "paddle boat" in north Louisiana), like barges, were built upside down, with little or no sheer to the sides, the bottom boards nailed athwart, with a slight rake out of the water at stem and stern. Designed to be rowed, such a boat would suffice if no skiff was available.

The introduction of internal combustion engines led to a rapid evolution of flatboats. By the early 1920s small engines were placed in long and narrow flatboats (*bateaux* in south Louisiana and "John boats" in north Louisiana). The popularity of outboard motors in the 1950s led to the demise of bateaux and the development of modern flatboats, which are relatively short and have a broad and flat bottom at the stern. Their main advantage over earlier craft is speed, as they can plane on the surface of the water rather than having to plow through it. The flatboat is now the most commonly used fishing craft on inland waters in Louisiana.

Coastal and Offshore Boats

Since stability is crucial for boats used in coastal or offshore areas, craft found in these environments are larger and more seaworthy than those on inland waters. The two major boat types used along the coast are the Lafitte skiff and the lugger. The Lafitte skiff, evolved from large skiffs once used near the coast, have powerful engines, plane easily and are noted for their speed. (Most can travel more than 30 mph.) The traditional near-shore boat, however, is the lugger – a craft introduced to Louisiana by immigrants from the Dalmation Coast of Yugoslavia. The lugger is the only craft commonly used in the oystering business, but serves the fishing and shrimping industries as well.

Because Louisiana fishermen did not exploit the far offshore resources, a boat building tradition of deep water craft did not develop. When shrimp were discovered off the Louisiana coast in 1937, Florida fishermen introduced the "South Atlantic trawler." This large boat was adopted by Louisianians, who began building small versions of it in backyards or larger examples in small boatyards.

Conclusion

Boats remain an important part of the folk landscape of south Louisiana. Their variety provides a good example of how culture, environment and technology interplay to bring about changes in boats and to determine how and where they are used. Louisiana craft are part of a living and dynamic tradition; while some boats have remained the same for over 200 years, others have changed greatly, and the evolution of style, form and use continues. Continuity and change are important aspects in a living culture; the small boats of Louisiana are a product of such a culture, and they will continue to retain their folk character as long as there is a strong and personal relationship between the local people and their environment.

Houseboat and *bateau* on bayou in southwest Louisiana near Evangeline, Acadian Parish. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

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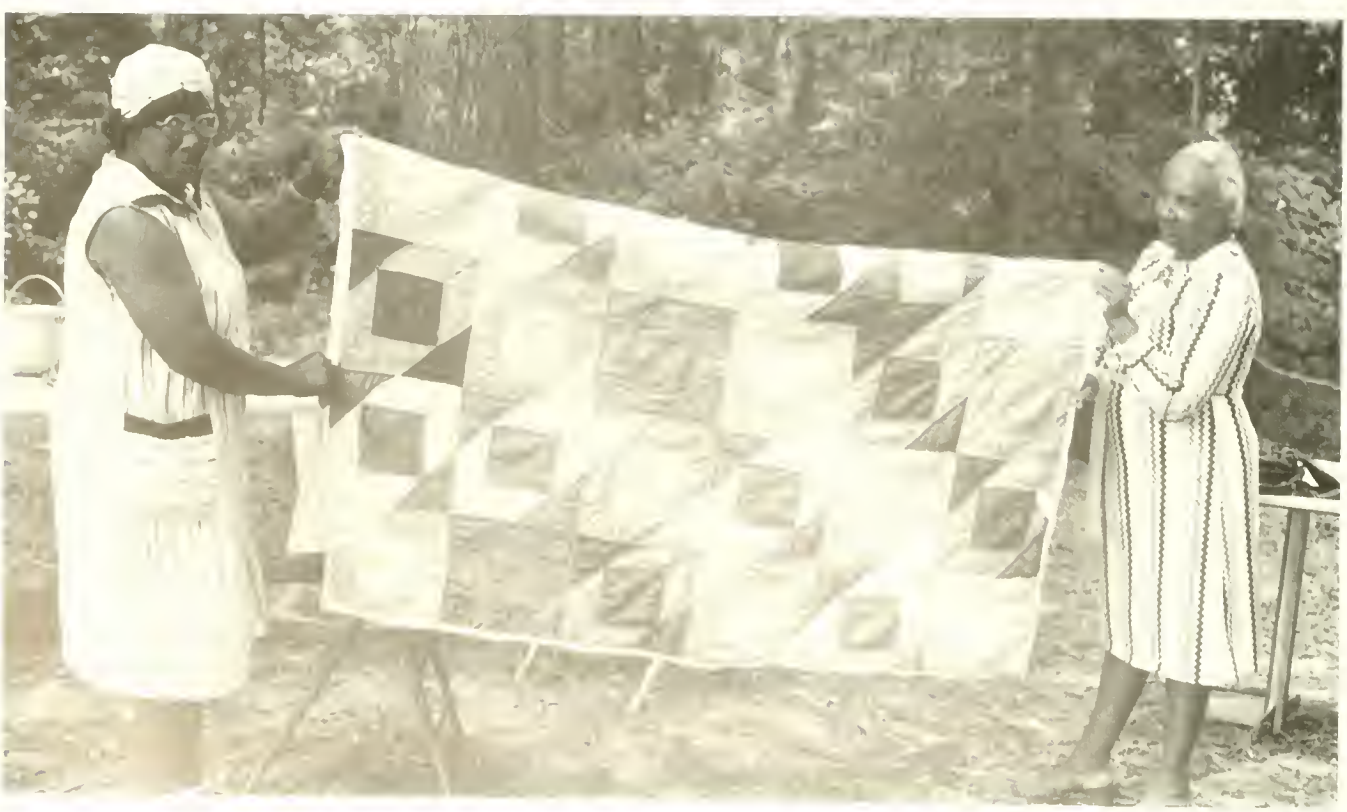
Regional Folklife of North Louisiana: A Cultural Patchwork

by Susan Roach-Lankford

Susan Roach-Lankford, a native of Lincoln Parish, has been active in documenting north Louisiana folk traditions since 1978. She has also served as curator of museum exhibitions of quilts and folk arts, has written on regional folklife and quiltmaking and has been a consultant for the Louisiana Folklife Program and for numerous folklife festivals. Currently vice chairman of the Louisiana Folklife Commission, she is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Texas.

Outsiders often stereotype all of Louisiana as "Cajun" swampland; however, a closer look shows that the geography and folklife of the northern part of the state differ considerably from that of south Louisiana. In sharp contrast to the French-dominated culture of south Louisiana, the north is characterized by its Anglo-and Afro-American folk music traditions, such as old time country string bands and country blues; small farming and such crafts as white-oak basketry; foodways, such as hot water corn bread and butterbeans; and the prevalence of Protestantism. Mapping the cultural differences between north and south Louisiana reveals a rough boundary based on a peculiar complex of geographical, historical and cultural circumstances that continue to distinguish the two areas (see map).

North Louisiana has diverse geographical features, ranging from the lowlands of the Mississippi Delta and the Red River Valley, to the pine hills of the northwestern and central parishes, to the terrace flatwoods of the southwestern parishes. The first Spanish explorers under DeSoto in 1540 found American Indians living mainly in the



Women display a quilt at a north Louisiana community fair in Grambling. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

Coushatta Indian Lorena Langley weaves pine straw basketry in her home in Elton
Photo by Rosan A. Jordan

lowland areas and hunting in the forests. They included people belonging to the Caddoan and Muskogean language families and a number of small, linguistically isolated groups. Their numbers had been greatly reduced by the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when Indian lands were gradually sold to whites.

Today north Louisiana Indians are mainly descended from the Koasati and Choctaw tribes that migrated into the area after Europeans began settlement. In 1884 the Koasati settled on the border of French Louisiana near Elton in Allen Parish, where they maintain such tribal traditions as their coiled pine straw basketry, their language and racquet games. The Choctaw migrated from Mississippi and settled in central Louisiana. The Jena band in LaSalle Parish continues to speak its native language and to practice such traditional crafts as deer hide-tanning and basketry. Although modern training programs have led many Indians into skilled professions, most remain basically rural farmers, trappers and fishermen.

In addition to Indian and Spanish influences in the area, French colonists led by St. Denis in 1714 established the first permanent settlement in Louisiana on the Red River — Natchitoches. The rich soil of the area and the importation of slaves from the French West Indies in 1716 and from Africa in 1720 provided the basis for the initial cot

ton and sugar plantation system in the region. The Natchitoches/Cane River area was greatly influenced by the French Creole planters and also by an enclave of *gens de couleur libre* (Creoles of Color) from the Isle Brevelle colony founded by freed slaves. The colony's well educated members of mixed ethnic origins (French, Spanish, Indian and African) held themselves aloof from the "red-necked Americans" who lived in the less fertile piney woods around the plantations. Many in the Natchitoches area still affiliate with the French Creole heritage, which sets them apart from the rest of north Louisiana. This heritage is expressly marked by French Creole architecture and foodways, such as Cane River cake and Natchitoches meat pies.

Other scattered small communities of non-Anglo Europeans in north Louisiana include Italians in Shreveport and Alexandria, Czechs and Bohemians near Alexandria, Belgians in Many, Spanish at Robeline and around Zwolle and Germans in Webster Parish. Since each of these groups makes up only a tiny fraction of the population of any parish, it is not surprising that most of their Old World traditions have disappeared or merged with the dominant Anglo southern culture. However, today many of these groups are attempting to revive their customs and history.

The Scotch-Irish continue to be the principal shapers of the regional culture of north Louisiana. These Protestant settlers began moving into the area after the Louisiana Purchase, bringing with them their belief in hard work and self-reliance, and their staunch no nonsense Protestantism, which taught that it was sinful to dance, to play cards, to engage in frivolous pastimes, or to break the Sabbath. This world view, in contrast to more *laissez faire* Catholic attitudes prevalent in south Louisiana, is still apparent in many laws prohibiting alcohol and the sale of merchandise on Sundays.

The religious practices of the Scotch-Irish and the African slaves they brought with them varied according to the different denominations which were, and still are, primarily evangelical Protestant sects (mainly segregated Baptist and Methodist and some Presbyterian). Many community churches in the region still maintain a complex of religious traditions which date back to the days of settlement, such as

Split oak basketmakers Jim and Azzie Roland of Marion show a cross section of their work.
Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

Clonie Otwell of Pearidge Community, Dubach, in front of his double pen log cabin
Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

Sunday afternoon singings and "dinner on the grounds," family gospel singing, funeral and burial customs and graveyard workings ("memorial days"). Such rituals, together with secular traditions like family reunions, reflect the emphasis on family and religion and maintain the conservative nature of the region. As a woman from the pine woods of Vernon Parish explains: "It was in the family; we just do traditional things. We are hill country people, and we just more or less do things the older ways."

Socially and philosophically conservative attitudes and slow economic growth of north Louisiana, together with its history of plantations and small farms, have helped to retain its traditional rural nature. The fertility of land helped to create a class system similar to that throughout the antebellum South, for the rich bottomlands were settled by planters with large numbers of slaves. By the early 1800s, with the development of the cotton gin and the steamboat, cotton had become the main crop of the Mississippi Delta and the Red River Valley. After the Civil War many of the plantations and farms of the yeoman slaveholder were divided into tenant farms rented to freed Blacks or poor Anglos. By the 1930s, with the overproduction of cotton and technical advances in farming, sharecropping became obsolete, causing tenants to move to marginal pine-flat lands or to jobs in the cities. Today in the lowland river areas the surviving traditional plantation "I-house," surrounded by equipment buildings and live oaks, can still be seen in the midst of hundreds of acres of farmland, more often planted in soybeans than in cotton.

The hill country was settled mainly by yeomen farmers with a few slaves and non-slaveholding farmers. They grew cotton to a lesser extent and were more self-sufficient than the planters. Today the rural

Harmon Martin of Pearidge Community, Dubach, plows his garden in front of his neighbors' traditional dogtrot and modern ranch houses. Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

landscape is marked by small farmsteads with occasional log dogtrot and double pen folk houses interspersed among the modern ranch style and mobile homes. Other folk architecture types still in use but rarely built today are the frame dogtrots (often with enclosed hallways for efficient heating), bungalows, shotgun houses, barns and other farm-related structures.

While such traditional farming techniques as plowing with mules and planting by the signs are still common, the year-round subsistence farmers have largely been supplanted by truck farmers, who supplement their incomes with work in the oil fields, construction on highways, truck driving or logging. Although many younger people left the farms after World War II, today more are staying in their rural communities, although they may hold jobs in nearby towns. Yet those who do move into urban areas usually maintain rural traditions, such as gardening and folk foodways (see essay by Gutierrez).

A number of farming and domestic craft traditions from the 19th century have also continued among Black and Anglo rural residents of the hills and bottomlands. Craft items may be made for traditional utilitarian purposes or simply for nostalgic reasons. For example, white-oak baskets may be used for gathering the harvest or as living room decor, and quilts may be used either for bed covers or as wall hangings.

Many crafts take advantage of the natural environment and by-products of farm cultivation. The forest provides white-oak for baskets, chair bottoms, fishnet hoops and implement handles; cypress or pine for riving shakes; hickory for whittling plow stocks, walking sticks, bowls, gun stocks and toys. Cultivation provides corn shucks for fashioning dolls or braiding into hats, yokes and place mats or

Mitchell and Josie Shelton sing gospel to a slide guitar accompaniment for a recording in the North Central Louisiana Folklife Project. Photo by Susan Roach-Lankford

Prizewinners Tex Grimsley of Shreveport and Louis Darby of Opelousas perform at the Louisiana State Fiddle Championship in Boyce
Photo by Al Godoy, courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

twisting into rope for chair bottoms and whips. Gourds, which in folk belief keep snakes away, are still grown for bird houses, dippers and storage containers. Fishing, hunting and trapping – still popular traditional pastimes as well as food or income supplements, especially in the swamplands – require craft items such as "John boats," hoop nets and hunting horns. These endeavors have kept alive the traditions of hide-tanning and trap-building as well.

Traditionally the realm of women, domestic craft production – quilting, tatting, crocheting, hairpin lace and embroidery – has survived more readily than the male counterpart of farm-related crafts. Quiltmaking, the most prevalent craft in the region, is done by Anglos and Blacks in both rural and urban areas. Many traditional patterns are still used, such as the Anglo favorites "Flower Garden" and "Double Wedding Ring" and the Black preferred "strip" or "string" quilt. The traditional "quilting bee," however, is much less common than in the days when neighbors and family got together for other communal events, such as barn-raisings and corn-huskings.

The favorite entertainment for community gatherings in the past was country music, which is still popular today alongside its country-western and bluegrass descendants. Rather than continuing the older work or house parties, today's north Louisianians go to "country music shows" like Shreveport's Louisiana Hayride and Shongaloo's Red Rock Jamboree. One feature of these shows, old-time fiddling, still provides the impetus for fiddle contests in the region, including the State Fiddling Championship at Rebel State Commemorative Area in Natchitoches Parish. Old-time fiddlers also "jam" with other musicians in their homes, playing tunes ranging from traditional breakdowns, waltzes and gospel, to western swing and popular music.

Among area Blacks, the blues tradition continues but is heavily influenced by popular soul music and rock-and-roll. The delta area in the northeast still harbors a strong blues tradition and features bands like Hezekiah and the Houserockers, whose music draws from jazz, minstrelsy and rock-and-roll. Blues traditions also continue among

[illegible] in the O[illegible] River [illegible] Union Parish. Photo by Susan Roach Lankford

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Suggested recordings

Cornbread for Your Husband and Biscuits for Your Man: Mr. Clifford Blake, Sr. Calls the Cotton Press. (Louisiana Folklife Recording Series, LP 001)

The North Louisiana String Band (Louisiana Folklife Recording Series, LP 002)

Since Ol' Gabriel's Time. (Louisiana Folklife Recording Series, LP 003)

Rose of My Heart. (Rounder Records 0206)

Suggested videotapes

Cradle of the Stars: The Story of the Louisiana Hayride, by Rick Smith and Carol Leslie. 59 minute color video. Louisiana Public Broadcasting, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Something Nobody Else Has: The Story of Turtle Trapping in Louisiana, by Lee Aber and Rich Luhann. 29 minute color video. Hawksbill Productions, Shreveport, Louisiana.

Blacks in cities such as Shreveport, once the home of Huddie Ledbetter ("Leadbelly"). Country blues musicians can also still be found in the rural hill areas, although they usually perform privately at home for family and neighbors. Many who played blues have switched to gospel music because it has more positive connotations.

The fondness for gospel music among both Blacks and Anglos is another reflection of the pervasive Protestantism which binds the region yet allows each group its own interpretation of tradition. Likening the region to a patchwork quilt, anthropologist H. F. Gregory suggests that north Louisiana is an arrangement of strips bound by this Protestant tradition. Thus in the patchwork of north Louisiana, Black, Anglo, Indian and mixed groups; urban and rural; yeoman and planter exist side by side, bound by a common regional tradition. Likewise, folk traditions exist beside mainstream American culture, just as older cotton strips are stitched to newer polyester knit fabrics in traditional regional quilts. Despite encroaching urbanization, the conservative Protestant world view and its work ethic continue to foster the existence of folk traditions in north Louisiana which are still as rich and colorful as the patchwork quilts made there.

New Orleans: Cultural Revitalization in an Urban Black Community

by Andrew J. Kaslow

Vitality and exuberance are two adjectives that describe the expressive culture of Afro-Americans in New Orleans. While the homogenizing effect of global marketing and telecommunication erodes indigenous folk traditions almost everywhere, Black New Orleans seems to have stemmed the tide, drawn on its own bountiful cultural wellspring and erupted in song, dance, ecstatic religion and social clubs. The much publicized revival of traditional New Orleans jazz through such efforts as those of the Preservation Hall bands which have toured the United States and traveled extensively abroad is only one fragment of a sweeping revitalization which continues to gain momentum.

The neighborhood is one component of the elusive urban "community" which nourishes the Afro-American traditions of New Orleans (Kaslow, 1981). It is the place for a great deal of social and cultural

Andrew J. Kaslow is an anthropologist who has done extensive fieldwork in New Orleans and the Caribbean. He has taught at the University of New Orleans and consulted with the National Park Service in the development of the Jean Lafitte National Park. Dr. Kaslow is currently a management consultant specializing in organization development and corporate culture change. He received his doctorate from Columbia University.

The Scene Boosters, a marching society, parades in New Orleans. Photo by Michael P. Smith from the book *Spirit World*

Zulu, the only official Black Mardi Gras Krewe, parades on Carnival day in New Orleans. Photo courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

"action" and provides a backdrop for some of the most colorful outdoor and indoor pageantry in America. While tourists are spellbound by the glitter and gala of Anglo Mardi Gras, with its endless parades of gaudy floats and plastic beads, they tend not to notice a tradition of Black Carnival societies with roots in African and Caribbean cultures, which turns ghetto neighborhoods into a showcase of visual splendor and ritual theater. These male associations of Blacks, who sew together elaborate suits using American Indian motifs, are hallmarks of an Afro-Caribbean legacy which continues to thrive in New Orleans of the 1980s. This suit-making tradition goes far beyond the frivolous costumes of Halloween, for the artistry required to fashion these spectacular garments is considerable. Built around "patches" of multi-colored beadwork requiring hundreds of hours to produce, the suits are constructed of feathers, rhinestones, sequins, ribbons and taffeta carefully designed and constructed into unique patterns, only to be dismantled and rebuilt each year.

The Mardi Gras Indian associations are organized into groups of a dozen or so individuals who carry such titles as "Chief," "Spyboy," "Flagboy" and "Wildman." Their music is cast in an improvisational call and response style in which a chief tells his special story, while his tribe and other "second line" followers chant a rhythmic refrain. Weekly practices are held on Sundays in local bars for the four or five months leading up to Carnival. On Mardi Gras day the tribes wend their way through the insular Black neighborhoods of the city. They encounter one another in a ritual dance and engage, mostly peaceably, in a verbal banter which is rich in vocabulary and elevated to a highly stylistic form of expression. The greeting ritual evolved in the 1950s

Chief Charles Taylor of the White Cloud Hunters Mardi Gras Indian Tribe is flanked by Spyboy Keith Barnes (left) and Little Chief Tony Gilbert. Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer, courtesy Louisiana Folklife Program

from previous streetfighting encounters, which herald back to the 19th century and the Caribbean.

Carnival associations are only one of the myriad social clubs which form the infrastructure of Black neighborhood life in New Orleans. Still other thriving traditions of affiliation with deep roots in the past are represented by the benevolent and mutual aid societies, which began as insurance and burial organizations. Groups like the Zulus and the Young Mens' Olympians continue to transform the neighborhood streets each fall with magnificent attire, brass bands and enthusiastic crowds of second liners. These second liners are joyous, dancing masses who invade the thoroughfares and claim them for their own for a few hours of "hard-nosed boogie" in the streets to the "hot licks" of the "funky" brass bands that fill the air with music. In New Orleans, people still dance to the sounds of jazz with liveliness and ecstasy.

Such social aid and pleasure clubs as the Young Mens' Olympians are organized into more traditional hierarchies, but there any comparison with other social clubs ends. Clad in matching pinstripe suits, borsalino hats, fine leather ankle boots and white gloves, the members proudly dance through the streets of the city. Many carry elaborate three-foot high baskets adorned with yards of ribbon and crested with a black baby doll. Inside the basket, a bottle of champagne is waiting to be imbibed at the end of the long day's activity. While the bands belt out choruses of "Down by the Riverside," "Little Liza Jane," "Go to the Mardi Gras" (a Professor Longhair original), "My Indian Red" (a Mardi Gras Indian traditional composition) and "Second Line," hundreds of people are dancing. Some of them perform "the gator," an undulating dance in which the legs are spread, knees bent, hips shaken, back

arched and arms held high. A decorated umbrella may be held aloft, as all the while the dancer's whole body moves forward, progressing with the flow of the parade. Some enthusiasts jump on top of parked cars; as many as four to six of them may be seen rocking on one car while letting out shrieks of frenzied delight as the roof bends in and out, threatening to collapse at any moment. This torrential hoedown sweeps through the neighborhood, engulfing the street in its currents of rhythmic body motion and sound.

Many of the actors in these spring and fall rites are the same. Largely organized into male associations, the men are the undisputed rulers of the streets — neighborhood heroes who pave the way for the less motivated to have a good time. Their investments of time and money in these endeavors underscore the high level of dedication to self-presentation and public image, according them a prestige in their own communities which they rarely achieve in mainstream society, where leadership and status are acquired by attaining totally different objectives.

A curious conjunction of traditions occurs on March 19th, which is St. Joseph's Day. Midway between Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent) and Easter, St. Joseph's Day is viewed by some as a break in the routine of abstinence. This holiday, originally from Sicily, was brought to America in the late 19th century (see article on Florida Parishes). St. Joseph altars are constructed in the homes of the descendants of these immigrants and represent one aspect of folk Catholicism, i.e. traditions associated with the religion that are highly localized, sometimes idiosyncratic and oriented to patron saint devotions.

The religious folk tradition of Sicilians became a significant influence on the Spiritual Church, a syncretic Black religion containing ele-

Musicians perform at Preservation Hall in New Orleans. Photo by Al Godoy, courtesy Louisiana Office of Tourism

ments of folk Catholicism, American Spiritualism, African *vodun*, Pentecostalism and Southern hoodoo. In the 1920s the Louisiana Spiritualist associations were integrated, and worshippers of Italian descent introduced the saint-oriented Afro-Americans to St. Joseph and the construction of altars dedicated to him. This tradition of altar-building survives in the contemporary Black Spiritual Churches, whose members also make feasts to the Indian spirit of Black Hawk, to the spirit of Queen Esther, to St. Patrick and to St. Michael, among others (Kaslow and Jacobs, 1981).

In a further coincidence, the Mardi Gras Indians don their suits on St. Joseph's Eve and, in some instances, on St. Joseph's Day. Thus a common reverence for St. Joseph by both sacred and secular celebrants occurs despite the two groups' mutual disregard for each other.

These unique traditions are connected by the common language of music, as well as through the overlapping membership of participants in different organizations. The forceful rhythm-and-blues traditions of Black New Orleans have become widely known through such luminaries as Fats Domino and Professor Longhair. The decidedly Afro-Caribbean flavor of this music clearly reflects New Orleans' location in the northernmost sector of the Caribbean simultaneously with its position in the southernmost segment of the North American continent.

The melding of French, Spanish, African, West Indian and American cultural traditions in an urban setting creates an extraordinary pastiche of "The Crescent City" on the Mississippi River. The transformation of this backwater community into a cosmopolitan city through such venues as petrochemical industries, tourism and the port, however, has not eroded its vibrant folk cultures. On the contrary, New Orleans has the potential to preserve its rich cultural resources while marching into the 21st century.

Suggested reading

Kaslow, Andrew J. "Oppression and Adaptation: Social Organization and Expressive Culture in an Urban Afro-American Community in New Orleans," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1981

_____ and Claude F. Jacobs. "Prophecy, Power, and Healing: The Afro-American Spiritual Churches of New Orleans," unpublished manuscript, National Park Service, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1981

Cultural Conservation

by Marjorie Hunt and Peter Seitel

This year the Festival begins what we hope will be a series of research and presentation projects on the topic of cultural conservation. The introductory statement to the Festival Learning Center for this program reads as follows:

> Cultural conservation is a scientific and humanistic concern for the continued survival of the world's traditional cultures. It grows like its sister concept, environmental conservation, from several related insights of scientists and humanists over the past quarter century.
>
> First, living individuals and groups exist within ever-widening webs of relationships that form systems. The concept of *ecosystem* for example, has helped us to understand interrelationships between natural species and to devise strategies for conserving threatened parts of our environment. In the understanding of traditional cultures as well we are learning to look at larger economic, political and social contexts as elements in systems of which traditional cultures are also parts. Seeing them in these larger contexts allows planning for their continued vitality.
>
> Second, the world's resources are limited, not unlimited. When cultures die, because their practitioners die or are forced or induced to give up their culture, great resources of understanding are lost. We all lose evidence of the variety of human cultural possibilities. Lost as well is native peoples' knowledge of their environment, based on intimate, painstaking observations compiled over generations — knowledge that may provide crucial information about managing ecosystems and the uses of particular plants. And aesthetic systems as complex and meaningful as any in humankind perish or leave artifacts devoid of their original meanings.
>
> But more importantly, the people whose cultures are defaced, if they remain alive, lose the essential human tool for comprehending and coping with the world, for understanding and integrating their lives, and for orienting and raising their children. The effects of their loss — social dysfunction and alienation — may last for generations.
>
> Finally, we have come to understand that it is possible to foster the continued vitality of "endangered species" — natural or cultural — without dismantling or derailing national and international economic, political and social institutions. Conservation can be made part of development plans. In the cultural sphere, this enables the bearers of traditional culture themselves to adapt their ideas and actions to a changing environment. They have done this when necessary for hundreds of years, within the

context of their own cultural thought, on their own terms.

Cultural conservation has been an underlying principle of the Festival of American Folklife since its beginning in 1967. This year we begin a program that explicitly explores the question of cultural conservation from several points of view. The exhibit examines the kinds of contexts in which cultural conservation becomes a necessary concern; it documents efforts on the part of the keepers of tradition themselves to conserve their own culture in the face of a changing social and physical environment; and it explores the efforts of U.S. public cultural institutions to address the problem of cultural conservation. We invite your participation in and comment on the exhibit, the performances by keepers of these valued traditions, and the discussions of various aspects of this most important topic.

As with many concepts and bodies of data in the social sciences, opinions on cultural conservation differ as to definitions, canons of evidence, analytic approaches and professional ethics. The scholarly articles that follow explore the range of situations in which we understand cultural conservation to be relevant.

Alan Lomax's "Appeal for Cultural Equity," first published in longer form in 1977, is an eloquent statement of the problem and a proposal for its solution. Addressing the social status of music as an expressive medium, he not only attests to the value of conserving living musical traditions on a worldwide scale, but also takes some of his fellow scholars to task for emphasizing ethnic distinctiveness in musical style instead of broader regional similarities, which might form the basis of regionally-oriented music industries. Charles Briggs' article is similarly directed to a particular expressive form; it develops an interesting conceptual framework for situating it within larger contexts; and, also like Lomax, it views the role of outside scholars and other nonnative critics as both ambiguous and crucial. Barry Ancelet's article, on the other hand, is an insider's view which addresses Cajun culture as a whole. While still playing the insider/outsider theme, Ancelet's piece gives voice to the exuberant revival of Cajun conciousness now in progress, charting its origins and most recent developments. Duncan Earle's article on the Highland Maya in Guatamala again looks at the interplay between outside forces and internal cultural dynamics. Viewing Mayan Indian culture in the context of present-day developments, Earle moves the arena of controversy beyond the scholarly community to the world of political institutions.

It is our hope that the Festival – through its performances, Learning Centers and program book articles – be a forum in which scholars and the public can explore the nature and implications of cultural conservation.

Appeal for Cultural Equity

by Alan Lomax

Alan Lomax, co-founder of the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress, has engaged in major folklore collecting activities in North America and Europe and was one of the principal architects of the American folk song revival. As Director of the Cantometrics project at Columbia University, he has been involved in cross-cultural studies of world patterns of expressive behavior.

This article is excerpted from "An Appeal for Cultural Equity" which appeared in the *Journal of Communication*, Spring 1977.

In our concern about the pollution of the biosphere we are overlooking what may be, in human terms, an even more serious problem. Man has a more indirect relation to nature than most other animals because his environmental tie is normally mediated by a cultural system. Since human adaptation has been largely cultural rather than biological, human sub-species are rather the product of shifts in learned culture patterns than in genetically inherited traits. It is the flexibility of these culture patterns — composed of technique, social organization, and communication — that has enabled the human species to flourish in every zone of the planet.

Man, the economist, has developed tools and techniques to exploit every environment. Man, the most sociable of animals, has proliferated endless schemes which nurture individuals from birth to old age. Man, the communicator, has improvised and elaborated system upon system of symboling to record, reinforce, and reify his inventions. Indeed, man's greatest achievement is in the sum of the lifestyles he has created to make this planet an agreeable and stimulating human habitat.

Today, this cultural variety lies under threat of extinction. A grey-out is in progress which, if it continues unchecked, will fill our human skies with the smog of the phoney and cut the families of men off from a vision of their own cultural constellations. A mismanaged, over-centralized electronic communication system is imposing a few standardized, mass-produced and cheapened cultures everywhere.

The danger inherent in the process is clear. Its folly, its unwanted waste is nowhere more evident than in the field of music. What is happening to the varied musics of mankind is symptomatic of the swift destruction of culture patterns all over the planet.

One can already sense the oppressive dullness and psychic distress of those areas where centralized music industries, exploiting the star system and controlling the communication system, put the local musician out of work and silence folk song, tribal ritual, local popular festivities and regional culture. It is ironic to note that during this century, when folklorists and musicologists were studying the varied traditions of the peoples of the earth, their rate of disappearance accelerated. This worries us all, but we have grown so accustomed to the dismal view of dead or dying cultures on the human landscape, that we have learned to dismiss this pollution of the human environment as inevitable, and even sensible, since it is wrongly assumed that the weak and unfit among musics and cultures are eliminated in this way.

Not only is such a doctrine anti-human, it is very bad science. It is false Darwinism applied to culture — especially to its expressive systems such as music, language and art. Scientific study of cultures, notably of their languages and their musics, shows that all are equally

Tongkeu Phoumynavong, a Kmhmu musician and recent refugee from Laos, plays the mouth organ. Photo by Frank Proschan

expressive and equally communicative. They are also equally valuable: first, because they enrich the lives of the people who use them, people whose very morale is threatened when they are destroyed or impoverished; second, because each communicative system (whether verbal, visual, musical, or even culinary) holds important discoveries about the natural and human environment; and third, because each is a treasure of unknown potential, a collective creation in which some branch of the human species invested its genius across the centuries.

With the disappearance of each of these systems, the human species not only loses a way of viewing, thinking, and feeling but also a way of adjusting to some zone on the planet which fits it and makes it livable; not only that, but we throw away a system of interaction, of fantasy and symbolizing which, in the future, the human race may sorely need. The only way to halt this degradation of man's culture is to commit ourselves to the principle of cultural equity, as we have committed ourselves to the principles of political, social, and economic justice. As the reduction in the world's total of musical languages and dialects continues at an accelerating and bewildering pace, and their eventual total disappearance is accepted as inevitable, in what follows I will point to ways in which we can oppose this gloomy course.

Let me deal first with the matter of inevitability. Most people believe that folk and tribal cultures thrive on isolation, and that when this isolation is invaded by modern communications and transport systems, these cultures inevitably disappear. This "ain't necessarily so."

Gordon Tanner, a traditional fiddler from Dacula, Georgia, performs with his son, Phil Tanner, and his grandson. Photo courtesy Art and Margo Rosenbaum.

Isolation can be as destructive of culture and musical development as it is of individual personality. We know of few primitive or folk cultures that have not been continuously in contact with a wide variety of other cultures. In fact, all local cultures are linked to their neighbors in large areal and regional sets. Moreover, those cultures in the past which grew at the crossroads of human migrations, or else at their terminal points, have usually been the richest. One thinks here for example of independent but cosmopolitan Athens, of the Central Valley of Mexico, of the Northwest coast of North America, the Indus Valley, the Sudan in Africa where black culture encountered Middle Eastern civilization across millenia — such a list would include most of the important generative culture centers of human history. I say then that cultures do not and never have flourished in isolation, but have flowered in sites that guaranteed their independence and at the same time permitted unforced acceptance of external influences.

During most of man's history contact between peoples did not usually mean that one culture swallowed up or destroyed another. Even in the days of classical empire, vassal states were generally permitted to continue in their own lifestyle, so long as they paid tribute to the imperial center. The total destruction of cultures is largely a modern phenomenon: the consequence of laissez faire mercantilism, insatiably seeking to market all its products, to blanket the world not only with its manufacture, but with its religion, its literature and music, its educational and communication systems.

Non-European peoples have been made to feel that they have to buy "the whole package," if they are to keep face before the world. Westerners have imposed their lifestyle on their fellow humans in the name of spreading civilization or, more lately, as an essential concommitant of the benefits of industry. We must reject this view of civilization, just as we must now find ways of curbing a runaway industrial system which is polluting the whole planet. Indeed, industrial and

cultural pollution are two aspects of the same negative tendency.

It is generally believed that modern communication systems must inevitably destroy all local cultures. This is because these systems have largely been used for the benefit of the center and not as two-way streets. Today, artists everywhere are losing their local audiences, put out of countenance by electronic systems manipulated from without, rather than from within, their communities.

Electronic communication is intrinsically multi-channeled. A properly administered electronic system could carry every expressive dialect and language that we know of, so that each one might have a local system at its disposal for its own spokesmen. Thus, modern communication technology could become the prime force in man's struggle for cultural equity and against the pollution of the human environment.

All cultures need their fair share of the air time. When country folk or tribal peoples hear or view their own traditions in the big media, projected with the authority generally reserved for the output of large urban centers, and when they hear their traditions taught to their own children, something magical occurs. They see that their expressive style is as good as that of others, and, if they have equal communicational facilities, they will continue it. On my last field trip to the West Indies, I took along two huge stereo loudspeakers and, in every village where I worked, I put on a thunderous three-dimensional concert of the music of the place that I had recorded. The audiences were simply transported with pleasure. In one island, the principal yearly people's festival, discontinued for a decade, was revived the next year in all its richness.

The flowering of black orchestral music in New Orleans came because the black musicians found steady, high-paying jobs and prestige in the amusement district and thus had time to reorchestrate African style and then record this local music for export to the whole world.

Philadelphia-based house party and block party musicians (left to right: James Ford, Robert "Washboard Slim" Young, and Horace "Spoons" Williams). Photo by Roland Freeman

The origin of the so called "Nashville sound" is another case in point. Nashville was once the sleepy capital of the state of Tennessee. In the 1920s a Nashville radio station began to broadcast the music of the nearby Appalachian mountains between advertising announcements. These particular local audiences bought products so enthusiastically that other southern radio stations followed suit by employing local musicians. This provided the economic base for the development of a vigorous modern southern rural musical tradition. Today it has several indigenous forms of orchestration which match the storied folk orchestras of Spain and Central Europe in virtuosity. Nashville has become the music capital of the U.S. because the once scorned style it purveys — reedy voiced solo ballads accompanied by string instruments — has always been a favored style of the majority of white working class Americans. This extraordinary event was taking place while most American intellectuals were bewailing the demise of American folk music. The reason that this tradition survived was that talented local performers got time on the air to broadcast it to local and regional audiences.

Nashville and other such new folk culture capitals are, at present, exceptions and accidents, but it is our responsibility to create others. By giving every culture its equal time on the air and its equal local weight in the education systems, we can bring about similar results around the world. Instant communication systems and recording devices, in fact, make it possible for the oral traditions to reach their audience, to establish their libraries and museums, and to preserve and record their songs, tales, and dramas directly in sound and vision without writing and printing them in another medium. Over a loudspeaker the counterpoint of the Mbuti pygmies is just as effective as a choir singing Bach. Thus neither contact nor rapid communication need inevitably destroy local traditions. The question is one of decentralization. We must overcome our own cultural myopia and see to it that the unwritten, nonverbal traditions have the status and the space they deserve.

Another harmful idea from the recent European past which must be dealt with holds that there is something desirable about a national music — a music that corresponds to a political entity called a nation. In fact, state supported national musics have generally stifled musical creativity rather than fostered it. It is true that professional urban musicians have invented and elaborated a marching music, a salon music, a theater music, and various popular song types, yet the price has been the death of the far more varied music making of regional localities. Italy, a country I know well, has, in almost every valley, a local musical dialect of enormous interest, largely unknown to the rest of the country. These myriads of song traditions are being drowned by a well-intended national communications system which, in the name of national unity, broadcasts only the fine art and popular music of the large cities. Cut off from its roots, Italian pop music, of course, becomes every day more and more dependent on Tin Pan Alley.

Nations do not generate music. They can only consume it. Indeed, our new system of national consumption of music via national communications systems is depriving the musical creator of the thing he needs most next to money — a local, tribal or regional audience that he can sing directly for. I think it may be stated flatly that most creative developments in art have been the product of small communities or small independent coteries within large entities — like the Mighty Five in Russia, like the small Creole jazz combos of New Orleans.

Real musicians, real composers, need real people to listen to them,

Table 1 Song style traditions

1. **Circum-Pacific**
   - Siberian
   - Native American
   - Australian
   - Melanesian
2. **Tropical (African)**
   - African Gatherer
   - Black African
3. **Oceanic**
   - Proto-Melanesian
   - Malayo-Polynesian
4. **Eurasian**
   - Central Asian
   - East Asian
   - West Asian
   - European

Cajun musicians perform on Revon Reed's radio show in Mamou, Louisiana, a program which features live French music every Saturday morning. Photo by Robert Yellin

and this means peole who understand and share the musical language that they are using. It seems reasonable, therefore, that if the human race is to have a rich and varied musical future, we must encourage the development of as many local musics as possible. This means money, time on the air, and time in the classroom.

Furthermore, we need a culturally sensitive way of defining and describing musical style territories and thus providing a clear, existential rationale for their continued development. During the past decade, a system of speedily analyzing and comparing of musical performances cross-culturally has been developed in the anthropology department at Columbia University. The system is called Cantometrics, a word which means the measure of song or song as a measure. The measures comprising Cantometrics are those that were found, in actual practice, to sort out the main styles of the whole of human song. The rating scales of Cantometrics give a wholistic overview of song performance: (a) the social organization of the performing group, including solo or leader dominance; (b) its musical organization, scoring level of vocal blend and the prominence of unison or of multiparted tonal and rhythmic organization; (c) textual elaboration; (d) melodic elaboration in terms of length and number of segments and features of ornamentation; (e) dynamics; (f) voice qualities.

More than 4,000 recorded examples from 350 cultures from every culture area were judged in this way. The computer assembled profiles of style from these 350 outlines, compared them, and clustered them into families, thus mapping world culture areas. It appears that ten plus regional song traditions account for a majority of world song styles. These regional style traditions are linked by close ties of similarity into 4 supra-continental style horizons (see Table 1).

When each of the stylistic zones is subjected to multi-factor analysis on its own — that is, when the musical profiles of its representative cultures are compared — we find a set of about 50 cultural territories that match in an amazing way those already known to anthropologists and ethnographers. From this finding we can draw two important conclusions for the defense of mankind's musical heritage. First, it is now clear that culture and song styles change together, that expressive style is firmly rooted in regional and a real culture developments, and

that it can be thought of in relation to the great regional human traditions.

Second, each of these style areas has clearcut geographical boundaries and thus, a general environmental character and distinctive socioeconomic problems. The people within these areas can see themselves as carriers of a certain expressive tradition and, sensing their genuine kinship with other cultures of the territory, can begin to develop the base lines for the local civilizations that are needed to protect their often underprivileged and undervoiced cultures. These discoveries compensate somewhat for the recent tendency of folklorists and anthropologists to emphasize the distinctions between neighboring and similar tribes and localities to the extent that neither natives nor experts could develop practical cultural politics. Local or tribal folkstyles should receive support and an equitable share of media time, not only on their own part, but as representatives of these larger regional traditions.

In traditional music, then, we can discover a testimony to man's endless creativity and a rationale for the advocacy of planetary cultural and expressive equity. We are impelled to a defense of the musics of the world as socially valuable because:

1. They serve as the human baseline for receiving and reshaping new ideas and new technologies to the varied lifestyles and environmental adaptations of world culture;
2. They perpetuate values in human systems which are only indirectly connected with level of productivity, and they give women and men — old and young — a sense of worth;
3. They form a reservoir of well-tested lifestyles out of which the species can construct the varied and flexible multi-cultural civilizations of the future; since they are living symbol systems, they have growth potentials of their own. As such they are the testing grounds for the social and expressive outcomes of human progress.

Practical men often regard these expressive systems as doomed and valueless. Yet, wherever the principle of cultural equity comes into play, these creative wellsprings begin to flow again. I cite only a few of the many examples known to me: the magnificent recrudescence of the many-faceted carnival in Trinidad as a result of the work of a devoted committee of folklorists backed by the Premier; the renaissance of Rumanian panpipe music when the new Socialist regime gave the last master of the panpipe a Chair in music at the Rumanian Academy of Music; the revival of the five-string banjo in my own country when a talented young man named Peter Seeger took up its popularization as his life's work; the pub singing movement of England which involved a generation of young people in traditional ballad singing; the recognition of Cajun and Creole music which has led to the renewal of Cajun language and culture in Louisiana. These and a host of other cases that might be mentioned show that even in this industrial age, folk traditions can come vigorously back to life, can raise community morale, and give birth to new forms if they have time and room to grow in their own communities. The work in this field must be done with tender and loving concern for both the folk artists and their heritages. This concern must be knowledgeable, both about the fit of each genre to its local context and about its roots in one or more of the great stylistic traditions of humankind. We have an overarching goal — the world of manifold civilizations animated by the vision of cultural equity.

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The Survival of French Culture in South Louisiana

by Barry Jean Ancelet

"What's your name? Where're you from? Who's your daddy?" When you first meet someone from south Louisiana, these are the questions you will probably hear. And you have to answer them before you can get along about your business. They are not rhetorical questions but quite serious ones designed to elicit information which helps to place you in the world of the Cajuns and Creoles. If you are from the inside, they want to know where you fit; if from the outside, they want to know how you got in and why. Such concerns could be thought of as xenophobic, but they are not. Rather they are simply part of a ritual to establish relationships — one which is used by a people whose history of tragedy and turmoil has taught them to be careful. Such questions function as boots for a people used to high water.

The French founded Louisiana in 1699. At first there were just a few forts perched precariously along the rivers of the frontier. Eventually,

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Young and old perform during Cajun Mardi Gras at Fred's Lounge in Mamou, Louisiana
Photo by Philip Gould

however, there developed a society of French colonials. To distinguish themselves from immigrants, those born in the colony called themselves Creoles, a word meaning "home-grown, not imported." Exiled after French Acadia became English Nova Scotia, the Acadians arrived in south Louisiana between 1765 and 1785, where they isolated themselves in order to reestablish their society along the bayous and on the prairies. In this area by the 19th century, the people of varied French cultures, enriched by the native American Indian tribes and immigrants from Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland, England and the new United States, created a "melting pot" which came to be called Cajun. The descendants of African slaves added a few ingredients of their own and borrowed from the pot to improvise a language, a culture and an identity which they came to call Creole.

In 1803, when Napoleon sold Louisiana to Thomas Jefferson in the biggest real estate deal in history, the territory, which stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, was divided up by politicians. Artificial, arbitrary boundaries ignored cultural regions and historical settlement patterns. The new State of Louisiana included the piney hills of the north and east, populated by English-speaking farmers, the bayous and prairies of the south, where French-speaking Cajun and Creole farmers lived, the rich alluvial plains along the Red and Mississippi Rivers — home of the aristocratic planters and New Orleans, with its multilingual, multicultural urbanites.

When the time came for statewide laws to be enacted, the very cultural and linguistic diversity which had created the rich new blends put a strain on the state's arbitrary borders. Early versions of the state constitution made valiant attempts to legitimize the French language, but as America charged on, the road signs to nationalism were all in English. By the turn of the century, the battle cry of President Theodore Roosevelt, "One nation, one language!" thundered across the land. The approach of World War I induced a quest for national unity which suppressed regional diversity. In 1916, when mandatory English language education was imposed throughout the state, children in southern Louisiana were punished for speaking the language of their fathers and mothers in school, as French was trampled in a frontal assault on illiteracy. Over several generations, Cajuns were eventually convinced that speaking French was a sign of cultural illegitimacy. Those who could, joined the headlong rush toward the language of the future and of the marketplace, becoming more American than Yankees. Everything emanating from outside their culture — including the English language — was imitated and internalized. Western Swing, for example, replaced Cajun music in the dance halls, while black Creoles, who had preserved their language and traditions largely in isolation, were increasingly diverted toward the national civil rights movement as their most pressing struggle. The discovery of oil produced an economic boom, which brought both groups out of the 19th century just in time for the Great Depression. Huey Long's new highways and bridges — first shared by horse drawn buggies and horseless carriages — now opened the countryside to link the bayous and prairies of south Louisiana with the rest of America.

South Louisiana was humming down this newly paved road toward homogenization. But was this the right road? Stress cracks appeared on the social surface: alcoholism and suicide among musicians and artists, juvenile delinquency among children who could no longer speak to their grandparents because of the language difference and, preoccupied with television, would no longer speak to their parents; selfdemigration among a people who now called themselves "coonasses."

Cajun fiddler Lionel Leleux and accordionist Don Montoucet play for an elementary school in Loreauville, Louisiana. Photo by Philip Gould

Louisiana's French cultures were beating a fast retreat, bearing the stigma of shame.

Then, in the late 1940s, the tide seemed to turn — particularly among the Cajuns at first. Soldiers in France during World War II had discovered that the language and culture they had been told to forget made them invaluable as interpreters and increased their chances for survival. After the war, returning GIs, aching from foreign battles in faraway places, sank into the hot bath of their own culture. They drank and danced to forget. Dance halls throughout south Louisiana once again blared the familiar and comforting sounds of homemade music. The glowing embers of the Cajun cultural revival were fanned by political leaders like Dudley LeBlanc and Roy Theriot, who used the 1955 bicentennial of the Acadian exile as a rallying point for the revitalization of ethnic pride. The message of 1955 was that the Cajuns had survived the worst; their culture and language, albeit injured, were nevertheless alive.

In 1968, the State of Louisiana officially fostered the movement with the creation of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), knighting former Congressman James Domengeaux as its chairman. The message of 1968 was clear: it was officially all right to be Cajun again. But the movement was not without its problems. CODOFIL found itself faced with the monumental task of creating a quality French language educational program from scratch. Older Cajuns who had once written, "I will not speak French on the schoolground" a few thousand times had learned the lesson well and thus avoided inflicting on their own children what had long been considered a cultural and linguistic deficiency.

The mandate of CODOFIL, as a state agency, covered the entire state, right up to its old artificial borders. For this reason, CODOFIL was forced to water its wine and pressed only for the establishment of French as a second language in the elementary schools. A dearth of native-born French teachers compounded the problem, and CODOFIL opted to import teachers from France, Belgium and Quebec as a stop-

gap-measure. This, along with a broad program of cultural exchanges, brought the Louisiana French experiment to the attention of the Francophone world. Meanwhile, activists on the home front felt that the indigenous language and culture were once again being forced into the shadows, as many Cajuns dutifully echoed past criticisms, apologizing that their language was "not the real French, just broken Cajun French."

On the other hand, the Cajuns were no longer alone in their battle for identity. For their own reasons, France, Belgium and French Canada became interested in fanning the fires of self-preservation along the bayous. They invested millions of *francs, piastres,* and dollars to create a life support system in the hopes that French culture and language might ultimately survive in south Louisiana. Along with money and teachers came hordes of tourists eager to visit this long-lost, long-forgotten, "exotic" place where, against all odds, French had somehow survived. This contact with outsiders has shown the Cajuns that, contrary to their childhood lessons, their French "works just fine" to communicate with folks who speak "real" French. And now that institutionalized segregation has diminished, black Creoles as well are becoming increasingly interested in preserving the French parts of their culture.

Visitors to south Louisiana, invariably bringing their own cultural baggage, often find their expectations frustrated by the reality of the situation. French Canadians, for instance, who come to find in Cajuns a symbol of dogged linguistic survival in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon North America find virtually no open Anglo/Franco confrontation or animosity in cultural politics comparable to the Canadian experience. Those French who seek quaint vestiges of former colonials find instead French-speaking cowboys (and Indians) in pickup trucks. They are surprised at the Cajuns' and Creoles' love of fried chicken and iced tea, forgetting that this is also the South; their love of hamburgers and Coke, forgetting that this is America, and their love of cayenne and cold beer, forgetting that this is the northern tip of the West Indies as well. American visitors usually skim along the surface, too, looking in vain for traces of Longfellow's Evangeline and a lost paradise, where past and present meet like the sky and water on the horizon.

To understand today's Cajuns and Creoles, one must take a long, hard look at their culture and history. Friendly, yet suspicious of strangers; easygoing, yet among the hardest nuts of all to crack; deeply religious, yet amusingly anti-clerical; proud, yet quick to laugh at their own foibles; unfailingly loyal, yet possessed of a frontier independence. Cajuns are immediately recognizable as a people, yet defy definition. As the saying goes, "You can tell a Cajun a mile away, but you can't tell him a damn thing up close." Black Creole culture is just as complex, involving more than the obvious confluence of African and French heritages. Before the Civil War, most black Creoles were slaves on French plantations, but others, called *gens de couleur libres* (free men of color), held positions in the business and professional communities and sometimes even owned plantations and slaves. Further, many generations of intermarriage with whites and American Indians produced an intricate, internal caste system within black Creole society, based on one's color of skin, dialect and family history.

The most consistent element in south Louisiana culture may well be an uncanny adaptability. Cajuns and Creoles have always been able to chew up change, swallow the palatable parts and spit out the rest. This selectivity has indeed become the principal issue of cultural survival in French Louisiana. Earlier change had been slow, organic and pro

Cajun fiddler Dewey Balfa from Basile, Louisiana. Photo by Robert Yellin

gressive. Now, much of it is imported at a dizzying pace. The fight to save the language looms large because many fear that, if it is lost, the culture will go with it, which raises some questions. Can it be translated into English without loss of cultural identity? To be sure, Cajuns and Creoles will eat gumbo and crawfish forever, but is "Jolie Blonde" sung in English still Cajun music? And where does one draw the line between Creole zydeco music and Afro-American rhythm-and-blues?

In the midst of this debate are signs of renewed vigor. Young parents are deliberately speaking French to their children. Young authors are writing in French on purpose. Louisiana teachers are replacing the imported ones. Even a few films have been produced locally with French soundtracks. Cajun music, once dismissed as "nothing but chanky-chank," has infiltrated radio, television and the classroom. "Zydeco King" Clifton Chenier, who recently received both a Grammy and a National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Award, has inspired a new army of black Creole musicians. With festivals and recording companies watering the roots at the local and national levels, young musicians are not only preserving the older traditional music but improvising to create new songs within that tradition.

Yet, while the French language struggles to maintain its role in the cultural survival of south Louisiana, certain inevitable changes in style reflect modern influences. Young musicians would be less than honest if they pretended that they never listened to the radio. Thus, the sounds of rock, country and jazz are incorporated today as naturally as were the blues and French *contredanses* of old, as Cajuns and Creoles constantly adapt their culture to survive in the modern world. Such change, however, is not necessarily a sign of decay, as was first thought; on the contrary, it is more likely a sign of vitality. Because the early effects of Americanization were too much and too fast, the melting pot boiled over. But the cooks of south Louisiana culture have since regained control of their own kitchen and continue to simmer a gumbo of rich and diverse ingredients.

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Les Blues du bal (Swallow 6020)

Louisiana Cajun French Music from the Southwest Prairies, vols. 1 and 2 (Rounder 6001 and 6002)

Louisiana Cajun Music, vols. 1 through 5 (Old Timey 108, 109, 110, 111, 114)

Zydeco: Louisiana Creole Music (Rounder 6009)

Selected films

Cajun Visits, by Yashia and Carry Agimsky. 30 min., color, sound (French and English). Flower Films, El Cerrito, California.

Dry Wood and Hot Pepper, by Les Blank. Two parts, 91 min., color, sound (French and English). Flower Films, El Cerrito, California.

Le Son des Cajuns, by Andre Gladu and Michel Brault. Four parts, 1116 min., color, sound (French). Office National du Film (Canada).

Dislocation and Cultural Conquest of the Highland Maya

by Duncan Earle

Duncan Earle is a professor of anthropology at Dartmouth College. He has conducted extensive research and fieldwork among the Maya of Guatemala and the Chiapas, Mexico, region for over a decade. As part of his fieldwork, Earle lived and studied with a traditional Mayan shaman.

The scene is set in 1524. The calendar diviner, Aj Itz, is praying to the Maya deities and counting through the small red seeds that lie in groups of four on his low table, while the Quiché-Maya war chief Tecun Uman paces before him. Each time the diviner comes to the last group, he shakes his head and throws up his hands in dismay. He tells the war chief the Spanish are coming, just as the warrior's dream had predicted, and that there is no escaping defeat at their hands. Tecun, disturbed, orders him to divine again, to call on the ancestral gods to overcome this threat to the Quiché kingdom. Resigned, the diviner sits before his table again, counts out the seeds, and, feeling the body signs run through him like little flashes of lightning, again predicts the kingdom's demise at the hands of the *conquistadores*.

The crowd looks on with interest — Quiché Indians in their festival clothes and tourists towering over them, raising their cameras from time to time. This is the traditional Guatemalan "Conquest Dance," a form of dance-theater performed each year in the town of Santa Cruz,

A scene from the Conquest Dance near Santa Cruz, Quiché. Photo by Duncan Earle

Mayan Indian musicians from Lemoa, Guatemala, play the traditional *tambor* (drum) and *chirimia* for the Conquest Dance. Photo by Duncan Earle

only a few miles from the ancient Quiché capital of Utatlan, where the original scene is said to have taken place. Many Highland Maya towns in Guatemala reenact the Spanish conquest of their ancient kingdoms as a way of teaching their history and celebrating the time when their ancestors were free of a culturally foreign yoke. A central figure in this historical reenactment is the diviner, who uses a 260-day sacred calendar of 13 numbers and 20 deities, or "day-owners", to make his predictions. This calendrical divination was once a common practice of all native peoples of Guatemala and most of Mexico, as well as central to the numerical and religious systems of the Classic Mayas, who reached their zenith as a complex civilization in the ninth century A.D. Now the calendar survives only in Highland Guatemala, where it is still used in secret by "day-keepers" who, like the diviner in the Conquest Dance, count out a random handful of red seeds from their medicine bundles in groups of four, to predict the fate of their clients.

While the Quiché, like some twenty other Maya language groups in Guatemala, are nominally Catholic, many of them still preserve a belief system that is fundamentally prehispanic. They maintain altars in the fields, in the forests, at the edges of canyons and on the tops of mountains as "tables" on which to serve offerings to the earth deity in exchange for bountiful crops and good health. Addressed in prayer are the deities of the wind and rain, the spirits of the plants and the animals, the volcanoes and plains, the heart of earth and the heart of sky, as well as the Christian saints and Jesus, who is conceived as representing the sun, together with his companion Mary, embodied by the moon. Prayers are offered before the altars in the home, the field, the church or the graveyard for deceased ancestors, believed still to watch over the lives of their descendents.

Much of this belief system centers on the sacred nature of time and of special places, of debts to the earth and the ancestors, and the im

A diviner reads the Maya calendar to see if his client's journey will be safe. Photo by Duncan Earle

portance of divining one's fate. For instance, certain birds may provide signs or omens, depending upon their flight direction, the time of day or night when they appear, the sound of their call and which day it is of the 260 day calendar. The date 2 TOJ may indicate that a small debt is owed, 3 TZ'I' may suggest asocial behavior afoot, 4 BATZ' may provide evidence of witchcraft, for each day name connotes a complex of meanings, and each number denotes a characteristic strength of that meaning.

This traditional system of belief is well adjusted to the daily life of the rural Maya household. The house itself is seen as "owned" by the original builder — usually an ancestor — and "rent" is paid on AJ, the "house" day, to its first owner. Although long since dead, he is still anxious to see respect paid to him for his original efforts now enjoyed by the living. This is accepted as part of the expense of living on the body of the earth, for everything in the productive and reproductive world costs something and accrues debt. Nature is never taken for granted; thus daily life in the rural household is a careful balance of costs and benefits, of things received and paid out, just as it is in public regional markets. Both economically and ecologically practical, the traditional Maya system also sanctifies the material world of house, corn field and forest and at the same time interacts with it. Corn, for example, the most basic element of the diet, is also the most sacred food spirit. Just as the Maya farmer "feeds" his field with sweat and his prayers in exchange for that which will feed his household, the spirit of life sustaining maize is fed through prayer and offerings.

The household environment, as well as the rural Maya house itself, provides not only the setting for daily life but for their religion as well, while the local Catholic church is but one of many similar stations on the community map. Whereas most world religions tend to be universally applicable through standardized churches, the traditional Maya system, like most Native American religions, tends to be bound to a specific ecological niche, a particular sacred geography. When we North Americans move from one place to another, we quickly adapt ourselves by seeking out a similar church or social group that fulfills our needs. A Catholic in New Hampshire can receive Mass in Virginia without difficulty, for the church structure is virtually identical and the other as close or distant in both states. But for the followers

of the Maya calendar the church is a fixed and specific location. Thus we must ask ourselves, what does it mean to remove the Mayas forcibly from their traditional homes? What is the cultural impact of becoming a refugee in a different country, or even another part of the same one, when cultural belief is so intricately tied to place?

Between 1980 and 1984, a million Maya Indians were moved from their homes through a systematic operation carried out by the national military. Tens of thousands of Maya men, women and children were killed. Over one hundred thousand fled into Mexico, most of them settling in a string of refugee camps just along the border. Thousands more are now being moved by the army into strategic resettlement camps as part of a militarized development plan. The United States harbors an estimated 70,000 Maya, although very few have legal refugee status. Whichever the form of dislocation, the effects were and continue to be traumatic. People have been abruptly and violently removed from their land, their relatives, their ancestors and their sacred geography. Not only have they suffered materially and emotionally from the loss of loved ones and the hardships of flight, but they have also been robbed of their "church," their traditional spiritual foundation, by losing the land on which they were raised and sustained.

When the Highland Maya were conquered by the Spanish in 1524, they were forced to pay tribute to their new rulers, yet most were allowed to remain on their land. This is, no doubt, a key reason for the high degree of cultural conservation by the Indians of the Highlands. The history of post-conquest Guatemala has been one of increasing encroachment upon Indian lands, but none has been as swift and

Here we are with our arms just crossed Chuj Mayan refugees in the camp of Rio Azul in Chiapas, Mexico, regret that they are not able to work their land. Photo by Duncan Earle

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See also *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, especially vol. 7, nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 (1983), and vol. 8, nos. 2, 3, and 4 (1984).

For further scholarly information on this topic write:

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massive as this, and none has endangered traditional Maya culture so profoundly. Even the areas fortunate enough to avoid extensive violence suffer under the general militarization of the Indian regions. All Mayan men are forced to serve one day a week in paramilitary civil patrol units, which disrupt daily life and create bitter internal strife within communities. For those who have been displaced, resettlement in government-supervised camps has led to massive alienation and widespread conversion to government-backed evangelical protestant sects. Separated from land and ancestors, unable to feed the altars or petition them for aid, many traditionalists experience extreme cultural disorientation, for which conversion to a politically safe evangelical sect is merely a convenient refuge. Those who belong to Reform Catholic or the standard Protestant groups are also strongly pressured to convert to the new sects. This they often do out of fear of being accused of subversion, for such an accusation leads to questioning or even disappearance.

In some part of rural Guatemala, the "day-keeper," following the custom of his ancestors, still divines for his clients. The "fate-measuring" medicine bundle is taken down from the house altar and placed on a low table. Red seeds and rock crystals are poured out, and a handful is removed, as the diviner summons the ancient deities. The seeds are grouped into fours, as the spirit-owners of the days are called up in their proper order, "1 C'AT, 2 KAN, 3 CAME . . ." And, as in the Conquest Dance, the client inquires about the future, hoping to learn something about the fate of his children, his village, his culture. These questions are on the minds of the Guatemalan Mayas wherever they have taken refuge, but the answers do not now rest in their hands.

The "Revival" of Image-Carving in New Mexico: Object-Fetishism or Cultural Conservation?

by Charles L. Briggs

The traditional arts have had a tough time of it during the past hundred years, as industrialization has flooded markets with mass-produced goods. Collectors have denuded the artists' communities of traditional works, thus depriving future generations of crucial prototypes. While scholars and *aficionados* have lamented the demise of traditional arts, their concern has often been expressed in efforts to induce the artists' descendants to "revive" their traditions. In order to enhance the economic feasibility of such efforts, artists are encouraged to orient their production toward well-to-do outsiders rather than their own less affluent neighbors. Since the patrons' cultural and aesthetic values contrast with those of the artists and their communities, "market forces" frequently alter the form, function and symbolic content of traditional arts along lines which seem alien to its producers.

This process is so pervasive that it often appears to be inevitable. One may rightly ask if artists, collectors, museum personnel and/or scholars can really change its course in any way. This short sketch of one tradition – image carving in northern New Mexico – will argue that the development of greater sensitivity to the nature of traditional art and the needs of the artists would go a long way toward improving the situation. My goal here is to stimulate the reader to ponder some basic issues – ethical as well as cultural and aesthetic – concerning the role outsiders have played in the evolution of traditional arts.

The Spaniards brought images of the saints as they journeyed north from Mexico to conquer, colonize and missionize the "interior provinces" after 1598. During the 17th and 18th centuries, religious medallions, oil paintings and even small statues, largely made in Mexico, were exported to the northern province of New Mexico. These religious images were executed in the dramatic European style of the baroque. Artisans, often the gray or blue-robed Franciscans, living in New Mexico began producing graphic paintings on tanned hides after 1700, and a few mildly baroque reliefs and sculptures in the round were locally made before 1800. The basic style, iconography and techniques used in these religious images sought to replicate European models.

But a very different style arose in late 18th century New Mexico. Hispanic artisans of New Mexico, utilizing mostly local materials except for some pigments, began to fill the region's need for sacred images with works of a folk style. The preceding orientation toward late Renaissance prototypes and styles was replaced by local aesthetic and iconographic selections. The result was the creation of a distinctly local, folk tradition. This Hispanic folk style flourished from about 1775 to 1850 in panel paintings *(retablos)* and persisted in sculptures *(bultos)* until the end of the 19th Century.

Anglo-American traders began coming to New Mexico after the

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J. Jose Dolores Lopez with examples of his painted furniture (left and right) and carved furniture (center). From a negative in the Photographic Archive of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe; the original metal-mounted photograph is in the collections of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821. They were followed by foreign church authorities and the railroad between about 1850 and 1900. Large quantities of lithographs and plaster of paris statues flooded into the area, and the market for locally produced images virtually disappeared by the turn of the century.

History shows, however, that the art was merely dormant, not moribund. In 1868 Jose Dolores Lopez was born in Cordova, a small community in the mountains of northern New Mexico, where he worked primarily as a farmer and rancher. When Cordova lost control of the surrounding grazing lands in 1915, however, the local economy fell apart, and Lopez and his neighbors were hard-pressed to find cash income to fill the gap. Lopez had always been a skilled furniture maker. (Two of his brightly painted chairs are shown in Plate 1.) Having begun whittling in 1917 as one means of reducing the anxiety he experienced when his eldest son was drafted into World War I, he soon began to use his newly developed chip-carving technique on his furniture. (Chip-carving, usually with curved blades, was a Spanish tradition, but the work of Lopez featured a straight-edge chisel, producing facets rather than troughs.)

Although initially Lopez produced works only for his neighbors and for the local chapel, he was soon "discovered" by members of the Santa Fe artists' and writers' colony visiting Cordova to witness Lenten rituals. Once Lopez was induced to sell his works at craft fairs in Santa Fe, the Anglo patrons profoundly affected the carving of this *Hispano* in both style and subject matter. Having convinced Lopez that bright house paints would prove too "gaudy" for Anglo-American patrons, they also persuaded him to widen his repertoire to include items, such as "Lazy Susans" and record racks, which were popular in Anglo-American homes. Exposure to German and Swiss mechanical toys resulted in Lopez's adaptations of these forms as well (see Plate 2).

The most profound change came when Frank Applegate induced Lopez to carve images. By the time of his death in 1937, José Dolores Lopez had created representations of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Our Lady of Light, the Archangel Michael, St. Peter (Plate 3) and other religious personages, frequently drawing on 19th century polychromed works as prototypes. The bright colors were replaced by a complex array of chip carved designs. In communicating his message to a non Catholic audience, Lopez frequently cut the name of the saint (along with his own) into the surface of the image.

Lopez's work had two lasting effects on his community. First, his children began carving, and now their descendants, as well as a number of unrelated families, are active carvers. Lopez's son George, in fact, was a recent recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship award, honoring his contribution to folk arts. Second, Lopez's images have generated controversy within the Hispano community; some considered it a sin to sell sacred images to non believers, while others felt that he was selling central religious and cultural symbols to non Hispanos for personal profit.

What shaped the patrons' involvement in the "revival"? Their actions reflect an attitude of what may be called *object-fetishism*. When they looked at Hispano New Mexican religious arts, patrons saw the products only as objects. Accordingly they filled private and institutional collections with objects — particularly images. They were less interested in understanding and documenting the *meaning* of these objects and the reasons that people continued to venerate them. When the *aficionados* did not find artists producing the types of objects they expected, they declared the art to be dead. Therefore they encouraged

2. *The Animal Musicians* by Jose Dolores Lopez (height 42.5 cm. or 17 in.). Collections of the Spanish Colonial Arts Society, Inc., Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe. Photo by Charles L. Briggs

Hispanos to "revive" such arts as carving, weaving, and *colcha* embroidery. Since Hispanos were seen as having lost these skills, the patrons appointed themselves as the arbiters of "Spanish colonial art," acting as judges in exhibitions and establishing craft schools to re-educate the local people in their own arts.

The problem was that the outsiders did not grasp the real nature of traditional art. Rather than merely a set of objects, the tradition of image carving involves patterns created by relationships between wood and color, design and workmanship on the one hand and between the artist and the community on the other. The nature of the art is also to

3. *St Peter (San Pedro) with His Key and Bible* by Jose Dolores Lopez (height 1.35 m or 4.5 ft.) On loan from Eva Salazar Ahlborn to the Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fé. Photograph by Charles L. Briggs.

be found in the dynamic ways in which these patterns intersect with each historical epoch. The objects themselves can be thought of as particular or partial embodiments of these patterns: their cultural and artistic value is reflected in the way they evoke the totality of cultural, aesthetic and historical patterns which shaped them.

Seen in this light, the patrons' efforts seem exceedingly naive. They tried to promote purely "traditional," "colonial," or "Spanish" works rather than the carvers' own syncretic traditions. This era found Hispano society, however, in a vastly different set of historical circumstances. With the loss of much of the groups' land base and their immersion as workers into an industrial system, the factors which shaped their art were vastly different. Consequently the patrons' efforts to induce the artists to remain within the narrow and artificial definition of "Spanish colonial style" forced the art out of its underlying pattern of historical relevance.

The patrons lamented the effects of industrialization and cultural homogenization on Hispano society. They believed that renewed production of 19th century styles would help preserve "Spanish colonial" culture as a whole. Their encouragement did not, however, focus on promoting new means by which Hispano artists could serve the changing needs of their own communities; rather the Anglo patrons

taught the artists profit-oriented marketing strategies and ways of accommodating the newcomers' aesthetic. The most important characteristic of the image-carving art had once been its tremendous responsiveness to the cultural and aesthetic needs of Hispano Catholics, but by prompting the artists to cater to the art market patterns of the dominant society, the patrons encouraged them to undermine the fundamental premise of the art. In the end, the patrons furthered the very process of commercialization and Americanization that they decried.

This case is not cited because it is unique, for the same process has affected innumerable traditions in the United States and abroad. Our interest in "folk" or "handmade" arts and crafts moves us to buy and sell objects as a means of fostering tradition. I am not arguing that this process is entirely bad or that a few individuals could reshape it *in toto*. But the case of Córdova should indicate how collectors, dealers and scholars play a role in deciding whether the actions of patrons bring objects and historical patterns into harmony or discord.

There seem to be two ways in which we can take a positive role in this process. First, because collectors, dealers and scholars affect the way in which both artists and consumers relate to art, we must direct our efforts toward fostering patron awareness of the fact that artistic traditions comprise complex sets of cultural and aesthetic patterns. While objects embody particular intersections of these cultural and historical patterns, they are not the tradition itself. We must understand and respect the full complexity of cultural and artistic diversity, since we cannot know in advance how these patterns will be reflected at any given moment.

Second, it is the artists themselves who translate the connections between culture, artistic tradition and history into visual forms, not patrons or scholars. Our interest in fostering tradition is thus best served by supporting the artists' freedom to decide how patterns come together rather than by defining for the artist the nature of tradition or excellence. Ideally, works of art promote dialogue between individuals, communities, societies and even different historical epochs. When one party dictates the terms of the discussion, dialogue becomes monologue. The central responsibility of collectors, dealers and scholars is to try to negotiate a genuine dialogue. If this can be established, traditional artists will have a better chance of communicating the richness and complexity of their message.

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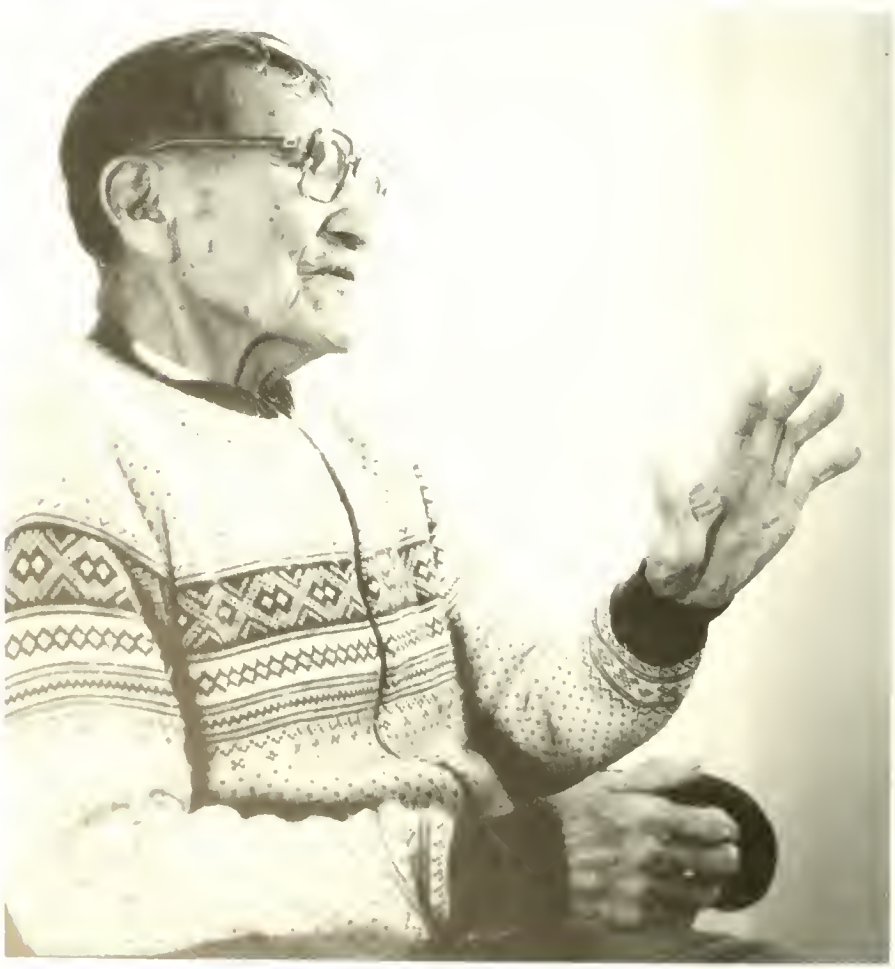
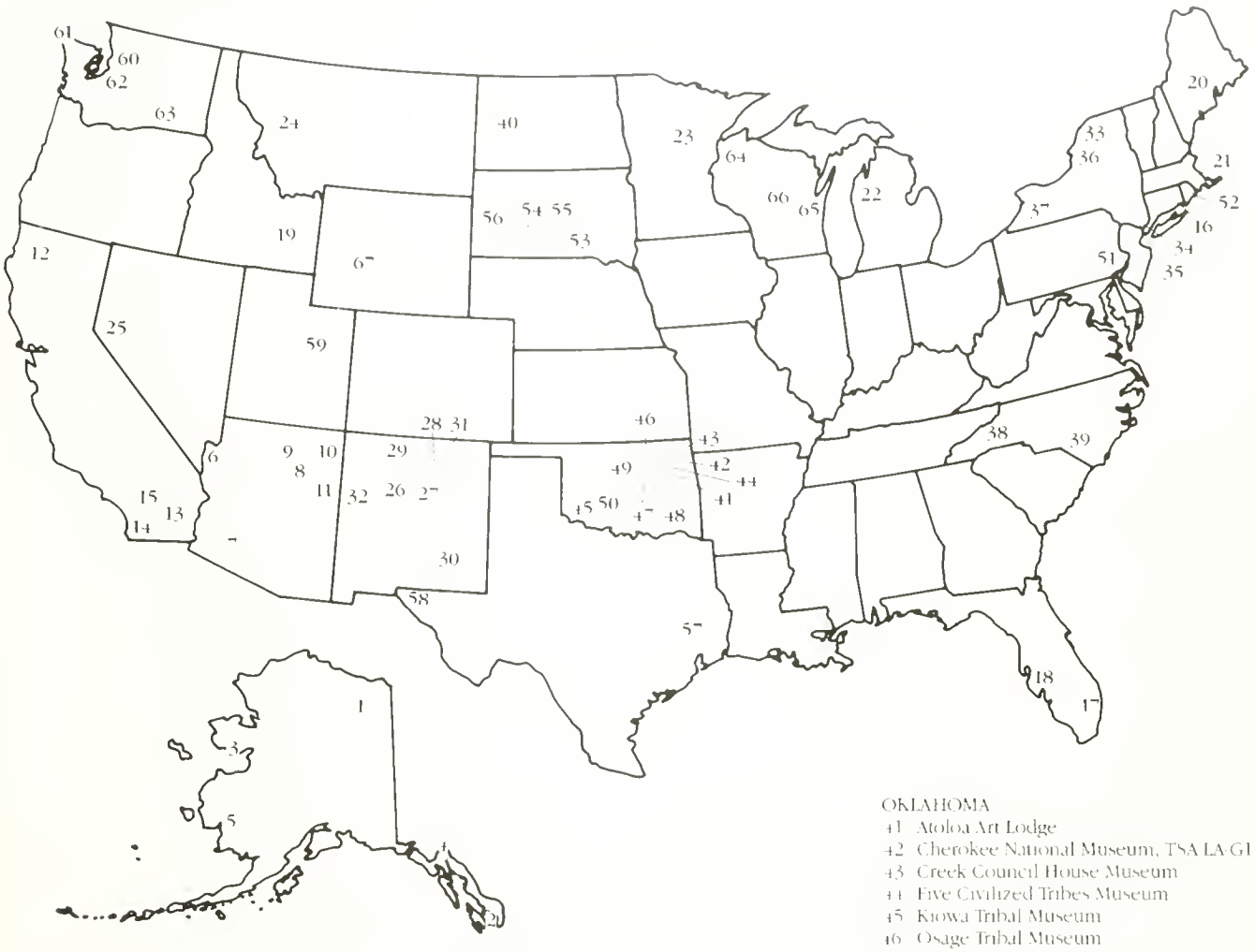
American Indian Tribal Museums:
Conserving Tradition with New Cultural Institutions
by George Abrams

George Abrams is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians and chairman of the North American Indian Museums Association. He is also director of the Seneca Iroquois National Museum on the Allegany Indian Reservation in Salamanca, New York.

During the 1960s and 1970s a new type of institution began to appear in Indian communities throughout North America – the tribal museum. Several phenomena contributed to its creation, including the Civil Rights movement and the subsequent reemergence of racial pride among America's first peoples. As federal construction money and various sources of cultural programming funds were suddenly available to spur the growth of these tribal institutions, because of continuing pervasive poverty in Indian communities and the lack of resources for development on many reservations, the governments of the various tribes decided to establish tribal museums as part of their general economic and community development efforts.

But the most compelling reasons for the rise of American Indian tribal museums were cultural. By the 1960s the traditional way of life





ALASKA
1 Dinjii Zhuh Inut Museum
2 Duncan Cottage Museum
3 Kuzhgie Cultural Center
4 Sealaska Heritage Foundation & Tribal Archives
5 Yugtarvik Regional Museum

ARIZONA
6 Colorado River Indian Tribal Museum
7 Gila Indian Center
8 Hopi Tribal Museum
9 Hopi Tribe Cultural Center
10 Navajo Community College Museum
11 Navajo Tribal Museum

CALIFORNIA
12 Hoopa Tribal Museum
13 Malki Museum, Inc
14 Rincon Tribal Education Center
15 Sherman Indian School Museum

CONNECTICUT
16 Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum

FLORIDA
17 Miccousukee Cultural Center
18 Seminole Tribal Museum

IDAHO
19 Fort Hall Reservation Museum

MAINE
20 Penobscot Museum Project

MASSACHUSETTS
21 Wampanoag Indian Program of Plimouth Plantation

MICHIGAN
22 Chief Blackbird Home Museum

MINNESOTA
23 Ayer Trading Post

MONTANA
24 Flathead Indian Museum

NEVADA
25 Stewart Indian Museum Assoc., Inc

NEW MEXICO
26 Acoma Museum
27 Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Inc
28 Institute of American Indian Arts Museum
29 Jicarilla Arts & Crafts & Museum
30 Mescalero Apache Cultural Center
31 San Ildefonso Pueblo Museum
32 Zuni Archaeology Program, Museum of the Zuni People

NEW YORK
33 Akwesasne Museum
34 American Indian Community House, Inc
35 Museum of the American Indian
36 Native American Center for the Living Arts
37 Seneca Iroquois National Museum

NORTH CAROLINA
38 Museum of the Cherokee Indian
39 Native American Resource Center

NORTH DAKOTA
40 Three Affiliated Tribes Museum

OKLAHOMA
41 Atoloa Art Lodge
42 Cherokee National Museum, TSA LA-GI
43 Creek Council House Museum
44 Five Civilized Tribes Museum
45 Kiowa Tribal Museum
46 Osage Tribal Museum
47 Potawatomi Indian Nation Archives and Museum
48 Seminole Nation Museum
49 Tonkawa Tribal Museum
50 Wichita Memory Exhibit Museum

PENNSYLVANIA
51 Lenni Lenape Historical Society

RHODE ISLAND
52 Tomaquog Indian Memorial Museum

SOUTH DAKOTA
53 Father Buechel Memorial Museum
54 The Heritage Center, Inc
55 Oglala Sioux Community College Resource Center
56 Sioux Indian Museum

TEXAS
57 Alabama Coushatta Tribal Museum
58 Ysleta Pueblo Museum

UTAH
59 Ute Tribal Museum

WASHINGTON
60 Daybreak Star Arts Center
61 Makah Cultural Research Center
62 Suquamish Museum
63 Yakima Cultural Heritage Center

WISCONSIN
64 Buffalo Art Center
65 Oneida Nation Museum
66 Stockbridge Munsee Historical Library and Museum

WYOMING
67 Arapaho Cultural Museum

Pueblo singers provide songs and music for a traditional dance performance presented as part of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center's Living Arts Program. Photo courtesy Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico

in nearly all American Indian communities in the United States had changed dramatically. Considerable concern was expressed that the Indian communities now needed somehow to preserve, reinforce, and emphasize their traditional cultural institutions; thus they began to collect the artifacts that represented these institutions and symbolized tribal ideals, and to house them in appropriate new settings, called tribal museums.

Importantly, there was also a growing need to retrieve, where possible, portions of their cultural patrimony which had left tribal ownership and now resided in the hands of non-Indian people and their museums. This so-called repatriation movement has also been accompanied by cooperative "extended loan" agreements between established non-Indian museums and emerging tribal museums. Also, the development of museum training programs provided some tribes with a nucleus of trained cadre of tribal professionals experienced in the various fields of museum work. While many problems — financial, political, and professional — continue to face tribal museums, tribal governments nevertheless continue to recognize the tremendous value of these representative cultural and educational institutions, not only for their own people but for all who wish to learn more about the unique cultures of American Indian tribal groups. In this way the various tribal museums are helping fill the void by presenting the story of their peoples from a new perspective.

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Makah elder Lida Colfax tells a whaling tale inside the Makah Museum longhouse. Photo courtesy Ruth and Lois Kirk

Jenny Thlunaut, a 93-year-old Tlingit Indian from Klukwan, Alaska, instructs a student how to weave a Chilkat blanket as part of a Heritage Study Program sponsored by the Sealaska Heritage Foundation and the Institute of Alaskan Native Arts. Photo by Larry McNeil, courtesy Sealaska Heritage Foundation and Tribal Archive, Juneau, Alaska

At the Rincon Indian Education Center, Valley Center, California, Luiseno children are taught about the traditional uses of native plants. Photo by Susan Dyal

Mela! An Indian Fair

by Richard Kurin

Richard Kurin received his doctorate from the University of Chicago and teaches anthropology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He is currently coordinating the Smithsonian's Mela program and Aditi exhibition, as well as advising on Festival of India activities.

Partial funding for Mela! An Indian Fair has been provided by The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation Ltd. of India, The Ashok Group of Hotels (India Tourism Development Corporation), and Coromandel Fertilizers Ltd., an Indo-U.S. venture.

Mela! An Indian Fair on the National Mall provides a culturally appropriate setting for a variety of Indian ritual, performance, craft, commercial, aesthetic and culinary traditions. Presenting the skills of more than 60 folk artists, craftspeople and cultural specialists from India and the Indian-American community in a temporary bazaar replete with Indian handicrafts and cuisine, this program offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience and participate in Indian culture.

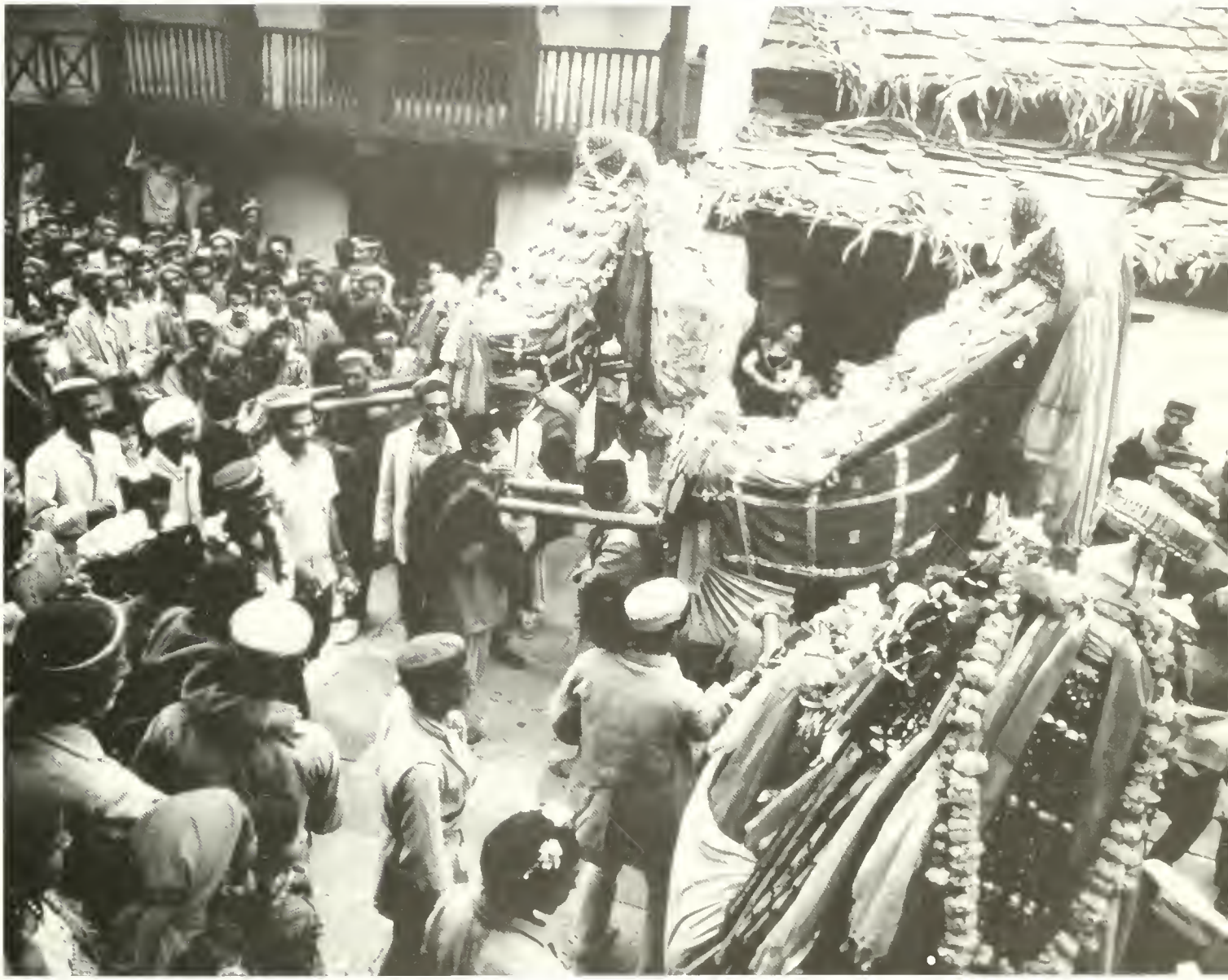
A *melā*, or Indian fair, is a large gathering of people who temporarily come together at a culturally appropriate time and place. Melās usually occur at the intersections of trade routes, river banks or confluences. The specific fair ground often has a rich history and is frequently associated with the deeds of a god, goddess or local hero. The time of the fair is set by the movements of sun, moon, planets and stars in accord with one of the various solar and lunar calendars which mark time in India.

Melas may be organized for a variety of reasons, but they often evoke and integrate three goals of action (*dharma, artha* and *kāma*) discussed by Indian philosophers, for fairs are at once religious, commercial and pleasurable events. According to the rather extensive survey conducted for the Indian census, most fairs arise from and have at their core ritual activities associated with a particular festival.

Festivals, or *utsava* (inspiring events), may celebrate religious feats, exemplary moral victories, or cosmological occurrences. Many of India's yearly festivals recall the actions of Hindu gods and goddesses – for example, the birth of Krishna (Janmashtamī) or the triumph of Durgā (Durgā Pūja). Others focus on the life or accomplishments of Hindu sages, Muslim saints (e.g., *urs*, or death/union anniversaries), Sikh *gurus*, or the leading figures of other religious communities, such as Buddha Pūrnimā for Buddhists, Mahāvīra Jayantī for Jains, or the festival of St. Francis Xavier for Christians.

Festivals may commemorate the victories of culture heroes both ancient and modern. The autumnal Dassehrā festival marks the victory of Rama and his wife Sita over the demon king Ravana some three to four thousand years ago, thus affirming the code of conduct expected of husband and wife, prince and princess. A similar victory of justice over injustice is celebrated on Gandhi Jayanti, the birthday anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi, who provided the moral leadership during India's drive for independence. Other festivals are closely related to the agricultural cycle and may express thanksgiving for a good harvest (e.g., Pongal in Tamil Nadu) or inspire the community to greet the needed monsoon rains – Tij in Rajasthan, for instance.

Melas often have a ritual center, be it a holy confluence of rivers, a sacred lake, or a temple or shrine at which religious activities take



Procession of local deities for the Kulu melā, held during the autumnal Dasshrā festival
Photo courtesy Air India

place. For Hindus, such activities typically include worshipping the deities *(pūjā)*, making special drawings or representations (*kolam* or *rangolī* floor painting), bathing *(snāna)*, viewing the deity *(darshana)*, enacting poignant dramas *(līlā)*, eating divinely marked foods *(prashād)* and singing devotional songs *(kīrtan* and *bhajan)*. Muslim rituals might include offering prayer *(duā)*, partaking of blessed foods *(tabarak)* and singing special songs *(qauwālī)*. At a Sikh melā one might find a two-day continuous reading (Akhand Pāth) of the Adi Granth and the ingestion of *amrit*, the symbolic nectar of life. Despite the fact that these ritual activities vary, Indian melās are noteworthy for transcending differences and drawing together participants from diverse religious, ethnic and linguistic communities. Indeed, *"mil,"* the Sanskrit root of the term *"melā,"* denotes meeting and mixing. It is through shared experience, embodied in blessed foods, songs and sounds, sights and substances marked by a divine presence that people of different backgrounds become more alike and unified.

Most melās, even those seemingly constituted for purely religious purposes (like the Kumbha melās or the urs of Muslim saints), have features in common: pavilions and facilities for pilgrims and visitors,

including a temporary bazaar or market and food stalls, and performance areas, sideshow stalls and entertaining diversions. Many are in fact oriented toward the pursuit of trade and commerce. Like the temporary weekly markets in many rural districts, melās promote the circulation and integration of goods within the wider economic system by allowing the marketing of manufactured city goods in rural areas, as well as handcrafted tribal and village goods in urban areas. Several melas, such as those at Pushkar and Sonepur, function as large regional livestock markets where bovines, camels and horses may be traded. Such melās allow for the redistribution of livestock and determination of their market value. On a retail level, the makeshift stalls found at melās are equipped with a wide assortment of merchandise. Since whole families will often travel to a melā aboard their bullock cart, vendors are equipped with materials for everyone in the household: pipes, shoes and gadgets are popular with men; clothing, trinkets, household goods and ornaments with women. A large variety of inexpensive, ephemeral toys is often available for children, and animal accouterments – bells and harnesses – are commonly purchased by livestock traders who decorate their bullocks or camels in hopes of

making them more attractive to potential buyers.

In pleasurable fashion melās provide a traditional means for the transmission of knowledge. Children and adults cheer at the bullock or camel cart races, laugh while riding on human-powered ferris wheels and exhibit astonishment at the feats of the many itinerant performers – snake charmers, acrobats, jugglers, magicians, impersonators – who frequent the fair.

Melās have always been educational events, and it is through such exposure to these folk artists as well as folk theater groups that children learn of the living traditions of the wider community. Historically, the country fair in India has provided the forum within which various religious leaders, holy men and intellectuals would present their opinions. It was at melās that Western missionaries debated Hindu *brahmans* and Muslim *maulvīs* before assembled crowds. Currently, the state governments have recognized that melās are important events through which knowledge can be disseminated, so it is not uncommon to see pavilions set up at melās featuring exhibitions of modern agricultural technology, alternative energy sources and family planning.

Icons and images for sale in a melā stall

A makeshift food stall offering snacks to fairgoers
Photos by Daphne Shuttleworth

The Mela program on the Mall is really a fair within a fair. It is a composite mela, compressing both space and time to present selectively only a few of India's many traditions. Just as a melā would in India, the program encourages visitors to learn about and participate in Indian culture. The structures on the Mall have been built largely with natural and handcrafted materials from India, while the site itself has been designed to reflect indigenous Indian concepts. The Learning Center tent houses the various ritual activities associated with some Indian festivals: a pūjā, or worship ceremony to Ganesha, the elephant headed son of Shiva and remover of obstacles, is exhibited in order to impart to visitors a sense of Hindu household and temple ritual; kolam floor painting from Tamil Nadu is also demonstrated, as through such an art space is sacralized and made ready to receive the presence of the deity. Also in the Learning Center are artisans who build the bamboo and paper structures for the Hindu Dassehrā and the Muslim Muharram celebrations. For Dassehrā, the Rām Līlā is enacted. At the climax of this play about the defeat of the demon Rāvana by Rāma, a burning arrow is fired from Rāma's bow to ignite the statues of Rāvana and his allies. For Muharram, ornate *taziyas*— replicas of the tomb of Hussain, the martyred son of Ali – are paraded through city streets by Shiite Muslims. The rest of the site is organized according to the *pancha mahābhūtāh*, the five elements of Hindu metaphysics and their corresponding senses: sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. Song and dance will be found in the sound sections, as activities associated with space or ether, the most subtle of the elements. In the touch area, associated with the element air, are the acrobats, jugglers, kite maker, clothing and stalls for fans. In the sight section are numerous stalls offering items of brass, terra cotta, wood, leather and stone — all associated with the element fire and the notion of form. Roaming through this section are the magicians and impersonators to challenge the eye. The taste section features food, snacks and beverages, while the fragrances of India are evident in the flower, incense and essence stalls.

By walking through the site, enjoying its sensations and participating in its delights, one finds the melā an avenue for experiencing Indian culture and learning of its traditions.

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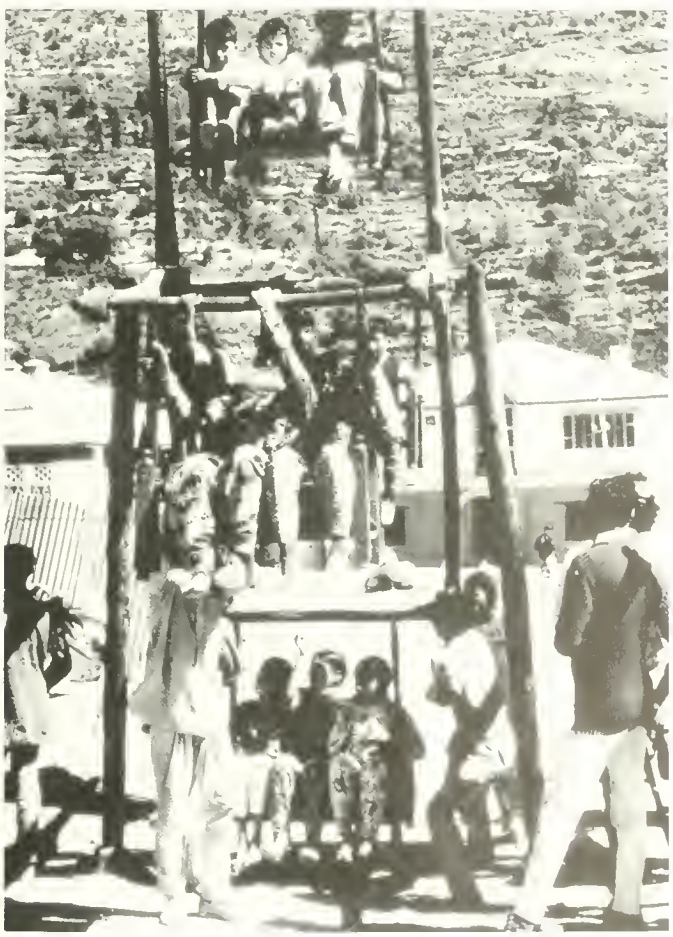


Folk dancers join in a circle dance to celebrate a festival in Gujarat

Children visiting the Kulu melā are entertained by a ride on the human powered ferris wheel. Photos courtesy Air India

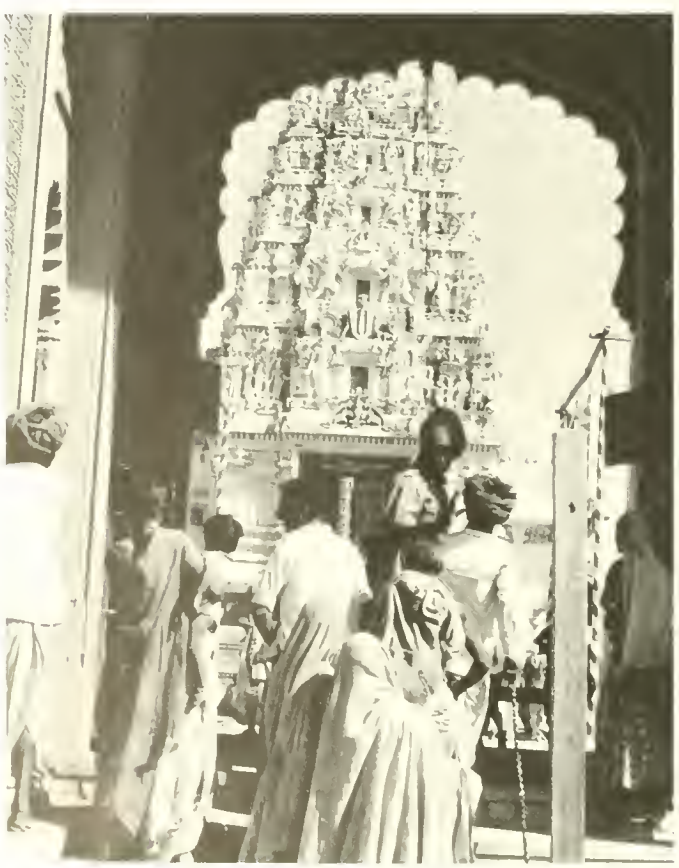
Commerce and Ritual at the Pushkar Fair

by Doranne Jacobson

Doranne Jacobson is an anthropologist and photographer who has conducted research in India over the course of several years, during which she twice attended the Pushkar fair. She has published a book and numerous articles focusing on change and the roles of women in South Asia. She is affiliated with Columbia University, where she received her Ph.D.

One of India's greatest *melās* takes place annually at the small town of Pushkar in the heart of the northwest state of Rajasthan. With the approach of the auspicious full moon of the Hindu month of Kartik (October-November), some 200,000 pilgrims and traders journey across sere plains and arid uplands to gather for five days at Pushkar. Following ancient tradition, the travelers move in groups both large and small, journeying in bullock carts, buses and trains, riding horses and camels, or walking long distances on roads and rocky paths. Most are villagers from the surrounding region, an area known as Marwar, and are garbed in colorful turbans or brilliant embroidered saris and ornamented with gold and silver jewelry flashing in the sun. Tribal peoples join city dwellers in throngs, surging through the narrow streets of the town and clustering on the shores of Pushkar's sapphire-like sacred lake. Thousands crowd into religious hostels, while many more set up camp in the open sandy areas surrounding the lake and the town.

Pilgrims enter the Ranga Nath Temple, one of Pushkar's many Hindu houses of worship
Photos by Doranne Jacobson



The primary goal of most travelers to the Pushkar fair is a ritually cleansing bath in the sacred lake at dawn on the full moon day (*pūrnimā*). With this carefully-timed immersion, Hindus hope to wash away accrued sins and progress along the path toward salvation. Here, in a locale of great beauty and sanctity, each pilgrim can personally experience the touch of the divine. Indeed, Pushkar's many resident priests, whose income is almost completely derived from pilgrims' donations, proudly proclaim that, even though a Hindu may visit every other pilgrimage site in India, unless he visits Pushkar his efforts to attain salvation are for naught.

In this semi-desert region, Pushkar's welcome blue waters have long been considered sacred, as evidenced by a profusion of gold-tipped temples, domed pavilions and 52 sets of wide, marble bathing stairways ringing the lake. According to legend, the lake was formed when Brahmā, creator of the universe, cast a lotus blossom (or *pushkar*) to earth. On Kartik's full moon day he wished to perform a sacred fire sacrifice at the site, but his wife Sāvitrī was absent. Without a wife's assistance the sacrifice could not begin, so Brahmā hastily married a local milkmaid, Gāyatrī, and the couple commenced the ritual. When Sāvitrī arrived, she was enraged to see Gāyatrī sitting beside her husband. She cursed Brahmā, declaring, "No one will worship you in any other place but Pushkar." Indeed, her curse came true: on the banks of Lake Pushkar stands the only extant temple in all of India dedicated to Brahmā. Sāvitrī herself repaired to the top of a nearby hill, where she is honored in a small temple. These and Pushkar's many other temples are crowded with worshippers during Pushkar's fair.

Like most of India's holy sites, Pushkar lures travelers from near and far, drawing together the faithful to reaffirm their devotion to the divine and to Hinduism's lofty principles. Many of the visitors are Raj-

Village women arrive at the Pushkar fair, carrying bundles of clothing and food. They will camp out and prepare meals over small fires.

puts ("Sons of Princes"), heirs to a proud martial history of valor and virtue, now mostly farmers. Other pilgrims include craftspeople, herders, merchants and mendicants. For all, the ordinary routines of daily life are interrupted by the enthusiasm and pleasure of the pilgrimage. Hard working, penurious peasants find in the pilgrimage a valid excuse for travel and recreation. For women of the region, most of whom are normally confined to their homesteads by the demands of work and codes of modesty, the Pushkar fair provides an especially welcome, community-approved opportunity to expand their first-hand knowledge of the wider world.

In semi arid Marwar, the area surrounding Pushkar, settlements tend to be small and widely dispersed. The melā comprises an excellent venue for buying and selling essential goods and livestock, as well as seeing unusual sights. Travelers bargain for animals in a huge camel and cattle market at the fair site, make myriads of purchases at merchants' stalls, meet seldom-seen relatives and seek blessings from itinerant holy men. They also enjoy song-fests, equestrian competitions, games, carnival acts, ferris wheel rides and performances of traditional Rajasthani musical dramas. In recent years, village fairgoers have been particularly amused by the sight of foreign visitors — tourists, diplomats, hippies and even film stars — who have discovered the delights of the Pushkar fair.

Throughout the five days of the gathering, men water and feed their animals and quietly discuss sale prices with potential buyers. Trading in livestock is of particular importance at the melā, as it is at a large number of cattle fairs held regularly in Rajasthan and other parts of India. Most are more local in scope than Pushkar's renowned fair, but all serve as marts for valuable livestock, particularly draft animals. At Pushkar, camels and horses are uniquely prominent. It has been estimated that some 16,000 cattle, 12,000 camels, 2,000 horses and 3,000 donkeys, buffaloes, sheep and goats are offered for sale every year.

In Rajasthan, because climatic conditions vary greatly from year to year and place to place, and drought is not uncommon, many owners must sell their animals because of a current scarcity of fodder. Others sell to obtain ready cash or to dispose of surplus animals. Thus thousands of animals change hands, purchased by both individuals who need the animals' services to pull carts and plows or to supply milk and wool, and dealers who will trade the beasts yet again — often outside the state, where some breeds of Rajasthani cattle are much in demand. In this way, the fair aids the circulation of animals in accordance with changing ecological and economic conditions, while the local municipality, which oversees the fair, realizes an income worth many thousands of dollars through taxing each livestock sale.

At the Pushkar melā, Rajasthan's Animal Husbandry Department organizes a special program acknowledging the key roles of animals in the state's economy. Before an enthusiastic crowd in the fair's huge arena, farmers with prize animals receive ribbons and praise for their efforts. Thrilling horse and camel events follow, recalling traditional Rajput martial values. Beautifully decorated camels and their owners compete in obedience trials and races, while equestrians display incredible skills. Spectators roar with laughter at a camel strength contest in which the objecting beasts are loaded with as many riders as they can bear before kneeling and unceremoniously dumping their good humored burdens to the ground.

Formal government sponsored exhibits also seek to instruct the fair crowds on new agricultural methods and crops, family planning goals and regional and national achievements. Such exhibits are meant to

enhance the fairgoers' sense of participation in their nation's rapid development.

Hundreds of merchants travel from the nearby city of Ajmer and other regions to provide for the pilgrims' material needs, while reaping substantial profits for themselves. Fees levied on the merchants add to the municipal coffers as well. Many merchants vend a variety of groceries and savory cooked foods, while others offer wooden camel saddles, bright appliquéd saddle blankets, embroidered horse decorations, embossed daggers and swords, painted metal storage chests, agricultural implements, bangles, ribbons, beads and brassware. Scarlet and gold tie-dyed saris and heather-toned woolen shawls lure customers, as do tangy snacks and medicines reputed to cure all ills. The frugal villagers bargain carefully for these items and dozens more, many of which are not readily available in their local bazaars.

Despite the Pushkar fair's numerous worldly attractions, the prime focus of virtually all visitors is the holy bath. At dawn on the full moon day, the melā's crescendo is reached on the misty shores of the lake. Lit by the golden rays of the rising sun, hymn-singing multitudes surge to the bathing steps. There they doff much of their heavy drapery, quickly dip into the chilly water and dress again. Guided by busy priests, they offer prayers and sacred foods to ancestors and deities, renewing their longstanding bonds to the past and expressing hopes for the future.

Pilgrims to Pushkar find in one bright package the satisfaction of conducting essential commercial transactions, the delights of recreation, the assurance of expanded knowledge, the contentment of reaffirming vital Rajasthani values and the serenity accompanying a deep sense of religious fulfillment. As the throngs leave Pushkar to return, renewed, to their daily lives, they carry with them vibrant memories of their experiences at Pushkar's glittering, jewel-like fair.

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An enterprising woman sells fruit to passing pilgrims.

Rajput farmers peruse religious tracts at a merchant's stall.

Kumbha Melā: The Largest Gathering on Earth

by Ray Charan das Angona

Ray Charan das Angona pursued graduate studies at the University of Rochester Center for Brain Research. In 1973 he received a grant to do fieldwork in India on traditional religious people, places and festivals. He has completed a full cycle of the Kumbha melā by attending each event over the past 12 years. While in India he has been writing, living with sādhus and studying at Benares Hindu University.

The world's largest gathering of people occurs at the Kumbha *melā*, a cyclical series of month-long spiritual fairs in India. The earliest historical records of this event may be found in writings of the Chinese traveler, Hiuen-Tsang, who visited Prayag (now Allahabad) in 644 A.D. He witnessed a spectacular melā attracting half a million people, where the magnanimous king gave away all his acquired possessions to the assembled *brāhmans* and monks of each faith. The mythical origin of the Kumbha melā is discussed in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana* and *Purānas*, ancient Hindu scriptures.

According to these accounts, Indra and the other Vedic gods lost their vigor as a result of a curse. Fearing that the *asuras*, or demons, would try to defeat them, the gods fled to Brahmā the Creator for help. Brahmā sent them on to the god Vishnu the Sustainer, who told them their former vigor could be regained by drinking *amrit* – the nectar of immortality – from the holy *kumbha*, or vessel. The kumbha had been lost in the milk ocean during the great deluge; to recover it the vast ocean would have to be churned. Since the gods alone did not have the strength to perform the task, they obtained the assistance of the dreaded demons, whom they lured with the promise of a share of the nectar.

The scriptures relate how, during the churning, deadly poison first rose to the surface, then the 14 priceless exotica, and finally the cherished golden kumbha. Gods and demons alike dove and fought for the coveted vessel, and as the battle raged, Indra's son Jayanta, in the form of a crow, snatched it and flew away. The chase continued across the heavens for 12 days (12 years in earth time), and in the ensuing scuffle drops of amrit fell from the disputed kumbha at four places – Hardwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nasik. The gods alone finally drank the nectar of immortality, leaving not a drop for the demons and thus preventing the ascendence of evil forever from the earth.

Kumbha melas are celebrations of this victory and serve as occasions where humans might sip the fallen drops of the nectar of immortality. The melas are celebrated in a 12-year cycle, which corresponds to the movement of the planet Jupiter. The core event of the melā is bathing in waters in which the drops of nectar are thought to be present. Thus the Kumbha mela occurs at Hardwar (where the Ganges emerges from the Himalayas), at Nasik, when Jupiter is in Leo, and at Ujjain in the Sipra River, when Jupiter is in Scorpio. When Jupiter enters Aquarius, the most dramatic of the Kumbha melās occurs in Allahabad, the ancient city of Prayag, where the Ganges and Jamuna Rivers are said to join the invisible and heavenly Saraswati River in a special confluence.

At the Prayag Kumbha mela in Allahabad, what was probably the single largest gathering of people on this planet occurred in January

1977. It is estimated that 20 million people attended some portion of the month-long festival, 11 million of whom bathed at the *sangam*, or confluence, on the main bathing day.

Preparations for this melā had begun in mid-October of 1976, as soon as the monsoon floodwaters had receded from the 2600-acre melā site. Using records from previous years government officials charted out a new Kumbha melā city on the sands. Over 20,000 workmen were employed to erect 14 pontoon bridges to ease the crush of pilgrims, 18 tube wells that could provide 22,000 liters of drinking water per minute, three massive water storage tanks, 100 miles of water lines, 4,000 taps and 13,000 hand pumps. Crews laid 60 miles of unmetaled roads, 10 miles of metaled roads and 90 miles of approach roads across the sandy river bed. Over 5,000 utility poles were erected, floodlighting the main bathing areas and roads.

The melā area was divided into 10 zones, each with a post office and fire brigade. A 16-bed hospital tent was set up in each zone and a 50-bed central infectious disease hospital erected, all manned by a medical staff of 75 volunteer doctors. In-coming pilgrims were innoculated against cholera in one of 33 innoculation posts. Over 30,000 latrines were constructed and 5,000 sweepers employed to remove trash. More than 200,000 tents were pitched by local associations.

Boatmen from up and down the Ganges and Jamuna flocked to the confluence, bringing 2,000 boats to ferry those pilgrims who preferred not to brave the surging crowds. The Indian Railways provided over

Sādhus bath at the sangam, or holy confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers. Photos by Ray Charan das Angona

Sādhus engage in *dum tapasaya*, the austerity performed by sitting in a ring of fire

300 special trains — 30 to 40 on each peak day — to transport an estimated 1.4 million pilgrims, and buses carried 400,000 on the day preceding the most auspicious bath. To handle these unprecedented numbers, police came from several states — 9,000 officers, plus 12,000 unpaid volunteers — in hopes of preventing another catastrophe as had occurred in 1954, when more than 500 people were trampled to death or drowned in a disastrous stampede at the confluence on the main bathing day.

A common spectacle during the first few days of the melā is the arrival of *sādhus*, or religious mendicants, who come singly or in groups. The group processions are often quite spectacular, featuring religious leaders riding in pomp atop elephants, seated on intricately carved silver thrones and served by attendants with peacock fans and giant velvet and gold brocade parasols. Bands of musicians make way for columns of the highly esteemed warrior ascetics known as *nāgā bābās*, clad only in loincloths or completely naked, their matted hair hanging loose or piled on top of their head. Some nāgā bābās ride horses or camels and carry spears with long banners representing their religious order. Bullock carts laden with provisions for their long journey and the month-long stay at Prayag bring up the rear, grinding to a halt at the edge of each camp area.

Crews had been busy erecting some 500 to 1000 makeshift camps replete with giant bamboo entrance arches and signs with the name and banner of each *guru* and his religious order. Behind the arches, spacious pavilions had been set up with central stages equipped with loudspeakers and lights. Around each pavilion were scores of tents and shelters for the sadhus and their attendants, as well as for the many pilgrims that would visit the camp. Day after day one pavilion or another would draw crowds from the ever increasing population of pilgrims. Some camps held religious assemblies of pilgrims and men chants led by learned men on lecture platforms; in others, musicians sang and played *bhajans* (devotional songs), elsewhere, drama troupes

The melā attracts nāgā bābās, mendicants who have devoted their lives to spiritual fulfillment through asceticism

enacted familiar episodes from the life of Krishna and Rāma, while throughout the melā, convenient altars and shrines could be found where pilgrims joined in *pūjā*, or worship. Vedic fire rituals were held on a grand scale, with hundreds of chanting brahmans offering clarified butter and a mixture of grain to the sacred fires; week-long mass recitations of scriptures were conducted; free literature was distributed from booths. Charismatic gurus entranced spellbound audiences, while elsewhere *mahātmas* (great souls) sat in meditation as pilgrims streamed by to touch their feet. Long into the night, naked sādhus sat around campfires, puffing on their *chilams* (pipes) to keep warm. In other camps continuous rituals were being performed amid the incessant ringing of gongs and cymbals. With arms upraised, exhuberant worshipers praised Siva, shouting "*Hara Hara Mahadev!*" In addition to all of these happenings, many pilgrims and beggars flocked to the free food distributions that were held at many locations.

The most awesome sight was vast hordes of pilgrims pouring into the camp as the bathing days grew closer. These pilgrims came predominantly from north India and arrived as family units with burlap sacks of provisions balanced on heads. Some came for specific auspicious days only, others for the entire month.

When pilgrims enter the melā grounds they generally search out their ancestral priest, or *pandā*, who is easily located by a conspicuous banner bearing his name or emblem. These pandās are brahmans who claim to be descended directly from the sages Bhardwaj and Parashar, who lived in Prayag in ancient times. Even if neither a pilgrim nor his father has ever come to a Kumbha, perhaps a grandfather or great-grandfather had attended. This is traced in the pandā's ledgers, which have been handed down from father to son.

Pilgrims follow certain fairly strict regulations: bathing before sunrise in the cold waters, eating only particular foods once daily, avoiding all sexual contact, and performing certain rituals. Pilgrims may pass nights in any of the hundreds of pavilions provided by various

Sādhu leaders conduct a pūjā or worship ceremony, and distribute blessed items to their followers

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gurus and religious leaders, near their ancestral priest, or anywhere there is room to spread a blanket and light their cooking fire.

Kumbha melās are rare events where ordinary villagers may see the great religious leaders of India. The melā also gives leaders themselves the opportunity to meet one another, debate fine philosophical points, decide important religious issues of the day, elect new leaders and participate in ecumenical councils. Typical of the well-known and popular spiritual personages who attend such an event are Deorhia Baba, who is very old and always stays in a stilt house; Prabhudatt Brahmachari, an admired old saint-scholar, whose permanent abode is just across the Ganges; Anandamayee Ma, the best-known woman saint and mystic of India, who died in August 1982, and Karpatri Ji, the great *pandit* of Baranas. Perhaps lesser known are Khadeshwari Baba, who has not sat down for 40 years; Doodhari Baba, who eats nothing other than milk; various Phalhari Babas, who eat only fruit; and Moani Babas, who have remained silent for one or more 12-year periods of *tapasyā* (austerities), generally from one Kumbha melā to the next.

Mauni Amāvasyā (the new moon of January) was the most important bathing day of the Prayag Kumbha melā, attracting an estimated 11 million pilgrims and sādhus. Well before dawn one could head out of the camp and wade through mud streets streaming with people, to be greeted by the almost terrifying sight at Kali Road: an endless vast river of pilgrims flowing at a fast pace, with people shoulder-to-shoulder 30 yards across. One merges into this surging sea, struggling to keep from getting trampled into the mush underfoot. In the predawn darkness one could still distinguish groups of ladies, each holding onto the sārī of the one before her, scurrying along singing cadenced bhajans in unison, or chanting *"Ganga Mā ki Jai!"* (Victory to Mother Ganga). Many carry on their heads burlap bags containing bedding, foodstuffs, fresh clothes, pūjā items and, most essential, a *lotā* (small round metal pot) for bringing home some sacred Ganges water.

An important event at the melā is the procession of religious orders to the confluence and into the water. Amidst blowing conches and

Procession of sādhus at the Kumbha melā Leaders are heavily garlanded and walk under parasols

beating drums a naked nāgā bābā horseman appears, covered in ashes, brandishing his trident, hair matted, prancing his gallant white steed. Then two more nāgā bābās on camels pass, vigorously beating their battle drums. Another nāgā bābā carries the monastic flag. He is followed by their tutelary deity, Kapila, on a decorated cart. Next march a band of 50 nāgā bābās carrying orange pendant banners on long bamboo poles. Then more, blaring conches and wielding weapons, demonstrating their traditional skills, swinging swords and long spears at lightning speed all around as they dance wildly, by turn, in front of the crowds. Behind them come the great processions of naked nāgā bābās walking four-abreast, their long matted hair reaching to their waists or even their knees. They are followed by hundreds of the new recruits, for the first time, stark naked in public and covered in ashes, heads freshly shaven from their all-night initiation. Behind them comes the great parade of the leaders of the religious orders. Some are on peacock or lion thrones atop gaily decorated floats, others are in palanquins carried, or carts pulled by as many as 50 disciples. As in the entry processions, each is accorded royal treatment by his followers, with attendants waving fly whisks and holding regal velvet umbrellas overhead. From these seats they give *darshana*, looking with holy grace upon the pilgrims.

Regardless of weather conditions, bathing on such a day is a joyful and liberating event. All protocol is relaxed. The sādhus run and splash water and mud on each other and chant and shout and play and dive into the water, splashing everywhere with abandon. One emerges from the waters feeling elated and light, laughing with new friends, having enacted Hinduism's primeval mythic quest: to sip the nectar of immortality from the golden kumbha.

South Asian Cooking

by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer

Deep fried vegetable *pakoras*, or fritters, are served as a snack or with the meal. Photos by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer

Jonathan Mark Kenoyer is presently with the Office of Folklife Programs as Assistant Program Coordinator for the Mali Exhibition. He received his Ph.D. in South Asian Archaeology from the University of California, Berkeley, and is actively involved in archaeological and ethnographic research in South Asia. His interest in food stems from his long experience as a professional chef and active research on foodways in both ancient and modern India.

Although many South Asian restaurants advertise a wide variety of "curries," in traditional Indian cooking no one dish is referred to by this word. Curry is the anglicization of the common Hindustani word *tarkāri*, meaning "green vegetable." Cooked vegetables (and sometimes even meat) are occasionally called *tarkāri*, but this word never appears on an Indian menu. Rather you will find an array of terms that indicate the types of vegetable or meat used and the method of their preparation, such as *gobi bhāji* (sautéed cauliflower), *subzī kā sālan* (vegetable stew), *makhnī murgh* (buttery chicken), *tanduri rān* (roast leg of lamb), or *baingan bartā* (mashed eggplant).

The subcontinent of South Asia includes several countries — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan; thus it is characterized by an immense diversity of geographical regions and corresponding cooking traditions. These regions range from dense tropical forests and fertile river valleys, where rice and a wide range of vegetables and fruits are available, to arid deserts and forested hills, where wheat, lentils and vegetables are commonly eaten. Other grains, such as barley, millet and corn, also serve as important staples in the diets of regional groups.

While the milk of cattle and water buffalo – also an important part of the diet – is prepared in numerous ways, such as yoghurt, buttermilk, fresh pressed cheese and condensed milk sweets, the consumption of meat is generally restricted by religious proscription. Certain Hindu groups, Jains, Buddhists and some Sikhs are strict vegetarians, yet even among these religious groups are some who will eat fish, eggs, chicken and even lamb or goat. Muslims eat only those meats that are slaughtered according to Islamic dietary laws and are then considered *halāl*, or the equivalent of kosher. This strictly excludes pork, reptiles and certain shell fish. Christians and many of the non-Hindu tribal communities are not governed by such dietary laws and prepare pork and beef as well as other meats. Though they are not usually considered a part of the Greater Indian Tradition, the many tribal groups in India that have until recently subsisted by hunting and gathering are still quite fond of wild game and continue their special dishes of monitor lizard, python, monkey and even elephant. These wild game can be extremely delicious when prepared with appropriately pungent herbs, chilies and spices.

In the face of this diversity, no single cooking tradition can be claimed characteristic of South Asia in general; rather the various traditions should be discussed in terms of regions and ethnic communities. Although the major cultural and religious traditions that have influenced the development of these regional styles are usually traceable only to the Hindu Vedic Period (600 B.C. to 1300 A.D.), it should not be forgotten that it was the Neolithic peoples in India who orig

Rice and lentils are important staples in all regions of the subcontinent. Clockwise from top: *papadam* wafers made from peas and lentils, urad lentils, red lentils, pounded rice flakes, *basmati* long grain aromatic rice, black rice. Center: glutenous rice.

inally domesticated livestock animals and the staple grains still used today. The similarity in the shapes of cooking vessels from the Indus Civilization (2500-1700 B.C.) to those used in traditional Indian kitchens today suggests that wheat and rice dishes as well as stews and vegetables may have been prepared in much the same manner as they are now. Also, the array of pottery serving dishes from the Painted Grey Ware cultures of northern India (1200-800 B.C.) are so similar to the *thāli* (plate) and serving dishes still made in brass and stainless steel that the custom of eating several varieties of vegetables, meats and condiments with a main rice or wheat dish may even have begun at this early date.

Strong evidence for the antiquity of certain Hindu dishes comes from ancient Sanskrit texts dating from the mid-second and first millennia B.C. Some of these special dishes still offered to the gods and eaten at holy festivals are often uncooked or lightly boiled and consist of rice or wheat flour mixed with sugar, milk, *ghi* (clarified butter) and fruits. None of the more commonly known spices are used because spices and pungent ingredients such as, garlic and onion, are not suitable in the offerings to the gods. In fact, many of the stricter sects of Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains avoid the use of such ingredients in their food. It is, however, equally evident from the texts that spicy foods and most meats, including beef, were consumed by the early Indo-Aryan and Vedic communities. The word *sālan*, the common term for any stew made with spices and herbs, is derived from the Sanskrit word meaning "to pierce," which in this context refers to flavors

In addition to the Hindu influence, modern South Asian cooking has been greatly enriched through the patronage of Muslim rulers who brought with them traditions from Turkey, Arabia, Persia, Central Asia and Afghanistan. Although these dishes as prepared in India definitely acquired their own unique style, the terms applied to them give some indication of their distant origins. *Qormā* (from Turkish) is a heavily spiced meat stew generally cooked in yoghurt. *Qimā* (from Arabic) refers to various meat dishes made with minced or ground meat. *Kōftā* (from Persian), originally the word for a meatball, may now even refer to vegetable balls or quennelles served with or without a sauce. *Kabāb* (from Arabic) is any form of roasted or barbequed meat, such as *sikh kabāb* cooked on a skewer, or *shami kabāb* – a meat patty that is grilled or fried (*shāmī*, from Arabic means "of or from Syria").

The unique flavors that distinguish these dishes from the same preparations in Turkey, Arabia or Iran are due to the delicate blending of aromatic herbs, seasonings and spices. No other region in the world has access to such a wide variety of flavorings as does India. Herbs common to most regions include green coriander leaves *(dhaniyā)*, mint *(pudinā)*, sweet nīm leaves *(karī phulīā)*, various species of basil *(tulsi)*, bay leaf *(tez patta)* and a variety of regional herbs, such as pungent moss, thyme, lemon grass and asoefetida *(hing)*. Seasonings range from a wide variety of salts, such as sea salt or black rock salt; numerous sweeteners made from sugarcane, palm sap, honey and various fruits; and sour or bitter seasonings from tamarind, green mango, citrus fruits and an exotic array of jungle fruits.

Spices are the most distinctive ingredients in Indian cooking and are often used singly or in various combinations to produce a wide range of flavors. Some authorities estimate the use of from 100 to as many as

Spices and aromatics: 1 cumin – *jirā*, 2 dried green mango, 3 dried pomegranate seeds, 4 ginger root – *adrak*, 5 turmeric – *haldi*, 6 mustard seed, 7 fenugreek – *methi*, 8 fennel – *soiva*, 9 lovage – *ajwain*, 10 anise – *saunf*, 11 black cumin – *shah jirā*, 12 bay leaf, 13 coriander seed – *dhaniyā*, 14 cinnamon – *dal chini*, 15 black cardamom – *kālā elaichi*, 16 & 17 cardamom – *elaichi*, 18 saffron – *kesar zafrān*, 19 black pepper – *gol mirch*, 20 clove – *long*, 21 nutmeg – *jāvitri*, 22 mace – *jaiphal*, 23 wild black onion seed – *kalonji*, 24 green chilies – *hari mirch*

300 different spices in the subcontinent. Certain combinations of spices are more appropriate for fish or meat or vegetables, and experienced cooks often prepare their own mixtures to use whenever they cook specific dishes. The most commonly used mixture, called garam masalā (hot spices), includes hot and aromatic spices, such as black pepper, clove, cinnamon and cardamom, but omits the burning hot chilies. It is from this tradition of premixed spices that the modern curry powder developed for the convenience of cooks who do not have the time or expertise to blend flavors appropriate to each dish. In traditional Indian cooking, however, it is not how many spices are used to create a unique flavor or how hot the dish has been made, but the effect that the spiced foods have on one's physical being. This little known aspect of Indian cooking and eating is explained in the texts and oral traditions of Ayurvedic medicine, an ancient Hindu science. Rules explain the effects of different spices and foods and prescribe the appropriate seasons during which they should be eaten. Some foods are considered good for children, but not for the elderly; some should be eaten only by pregnant women, and others only in the context of a religious ceremony.

The traditional sciences of Muslim *hikmat* and *Yunānī tib* that have their origins in Arabic and Greek medicine have also contributed to this general approach to food. Both of these traditions define food by its humoral properties of "hot and cold, wet and dry." Certain foods are extremely hot and dry, such as eggplant, *gram* (garbanzo) and dates; others are hot and wet, like tomato; and still others are cold and wet, such as cauliflower and rice (Kurin 1983:286). In keeping with these precepts, in the summertime special preparations are made that help the body adapt to the heat. Drinks such as *lassī* (butter-milk) and

A vendor in Lahore selling sweets, salty snacks, and fruit *sharbats* promotes his wares with a poster of a muscle man standing on the world

Sweets: 1 bālūshahi, 2 barfi, 3 carrot *halwā*, 4 *patisā*, 5 *gulāb jāmun*, 6 *ras gullā*, 7 *laddu*, 8 *jalebi*

sharbats made from fresh fruits and cream serve to cool the body, while hot and spicy dishes are eaten to stimulate the blood flow and help purify the body.

Beyond prescribed foods and ways of eating is the basic human tendency to enjoy exotic preparations, especially sweets. Indian sweets come in all forms and consistencies, from creamy rice pudding and semolina halva, to a variety of milk sweets drenched in syrup, to sweet pastries and spun sugar.

The greatest variety of foods, including sweets, is seen at *melās*, or festivals, where every season or commemorative event is ushered in or out with appropriate rituals and much celebration. As certain grains, vegetables and fruits ripen with the change of season, specific preparations become more common and are extravagantly prepared for the melā. During the celebration rich patrons distribute food and sweets to their dependents, and cooks prepare delicious meals for pilgrims and traders. Confectioners vie with each other to produce the most attractive sweets and stack them in towering arrangements covered with edible silver or gold leaf. No one passing by can resist such enticing displays or turn away from the aromas coming from the tandur ovens and barbeques, where breads and skewered meats are slowly cooking over aromatic charcoal. Presented with such a range of temptations it is not unusual for one to become uncomfortably full, but there is always a remedy available at the nearby *pān* (condiment) shop. Surrounded by jars of sweet-scented betel nut, tobacco and condiments, a *pān wālā* (vendor) will swiftly wrap individually specified mixtures in the astringent pān leaf. With this preparation tucked in the cheek, one can walk the traditional 40 steps that are said to help in digestion and enjoy a song or dance at the nearby stage before moving on to take in the other attractions of the melā.

Pan plate with assorted condiments. 1 whole *areca (betel) nut*, 2 *aromatic mixture*, 3 *fennel seed*, 4 *sweet coconut*, 5 *cloves*, 6 *cardamom*, 7 *katechu (acacia gum)*, 8 *lime (calcium oxide)*, 9 *prepared areca with aromatics*, 10 *katechu with aromatics*, 11 *slivered areca (betel) nut*

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Indian-Americans: A Photographic History

by Jane Singh

Although Indian-Americans make up one of the more rapidly growing ethnic groups in the United States, little is generally known of their history in this country. The community is often seen as emerging after the liberalized immigration law of 1965 removed restrictions and quotas formerly applied to most countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. Indian-American origins, however, go back to the turn of the century, when the first immigrants from India began arriving in small numbers at ports along the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada. Mostly farmers from the Punjab region of then British India, they joined the largely Asian workforce building the railroads, manning the lumber mills and working in the fields of the developing American West. In addition to them but dispersed across the country were a few students, businessmen and political exiles from various regions of India.

The early Indian community faced anti-Asian prejudices and policies. As increasingly discriminatory legislation curtailed and by 1924 cut off immigration, Indians were declared ineligible for naturaliza-

Jane Singh is coordinator of the People of South Asia in America Project, an exhibition and public program series. The Project is sponsored by the Oakland Public Library in cooperation with the Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley, and funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Singh is a doctoral candidate in South Asian languages and literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

Immigrants from the Punjab region of India came to the Pacific Coast via East Asia, where many had served in the British colonial army and police force. They were generally farmers who had left their land under pressures of droughts and taxation.

Punjabi passengers disembarking at Vancouver, British Columbia, circa 1908. Photo courtesy of Vancouver Public Library

Of the early arrivals, approximately 80% were members of the Sikh religion, 16% were Muslims and 4% were Hindus. Sikh *gurdwaras*, or temples, were soon established and became meeting places for Indian immigrants of all religions.

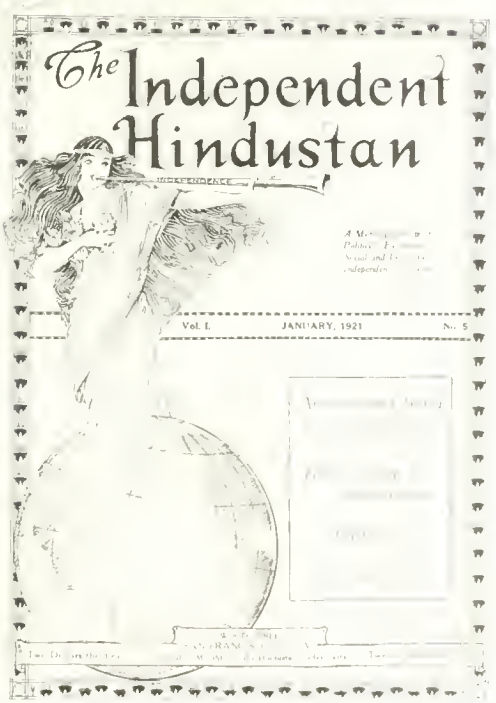
Sikh Temple, Stockton, California, circa 1912. Photo courtesy of Pacific Center for Western Historical Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California.

tion, and in many states alien land laws prohibited them from owning or leasing land. Indian-Americans responded to these hardships by drawing together through associations, publications and political activism. They fought for immigration and naturalization rights in the United States and campaigned against British colonial rule in India through such organizations as the militant Gadar Party, founded in San Francisco.

Until laws changed in 1946 the number of Indian immigrants declined from a total of nearly 10,000 in the first two decades of the century to only a few thousand. This small, almost invisible community made its impact in the United States in diverse ways. Among the first Indian immigrants were workers whose labor and skills helped build the West, farm proprietors who pioneered new methods of irrigation and cultivation in California and Arizona, and professionals who made distinguished contributions to science, technology and academia.

The 1946 Luce Celler Bill marked a turning point for this community by permitting Indians to become American citizens and resume immigration in small numbers. Many families were reunited, and the community experienced its first growth in decades. More sweeping change came with the 1965 immigration reform, which was designed to promote equitable migration from all parts of the world. Indian immigration then increased dramatically; with greater numbers,

Kala Bagai arrived in San Francisco with her husband and three sons in 1915. At the time, she was one of only seven Indian women in the western United States since immigration restrictions did not allow men to send for their wives and children. Photo courtesy of Ram Bagai



In 1913 Indian immigrants founded the Gadar Party in San Francisco to bring about the overthrow of the British government in India. The organization published periodicals and pamphlets in several Indian and European languages for worldwide distribution. *The Independent Hindustan* informed the American public about conditions in India under British rule. Photo courtesy of Gadar Collection, University of California, Berkeley

Immigrants from the Punjab have farmed land in California's Sacramento Valley from 1912 to the present, where they helped develop rice cultivation by using special irrigation systems.

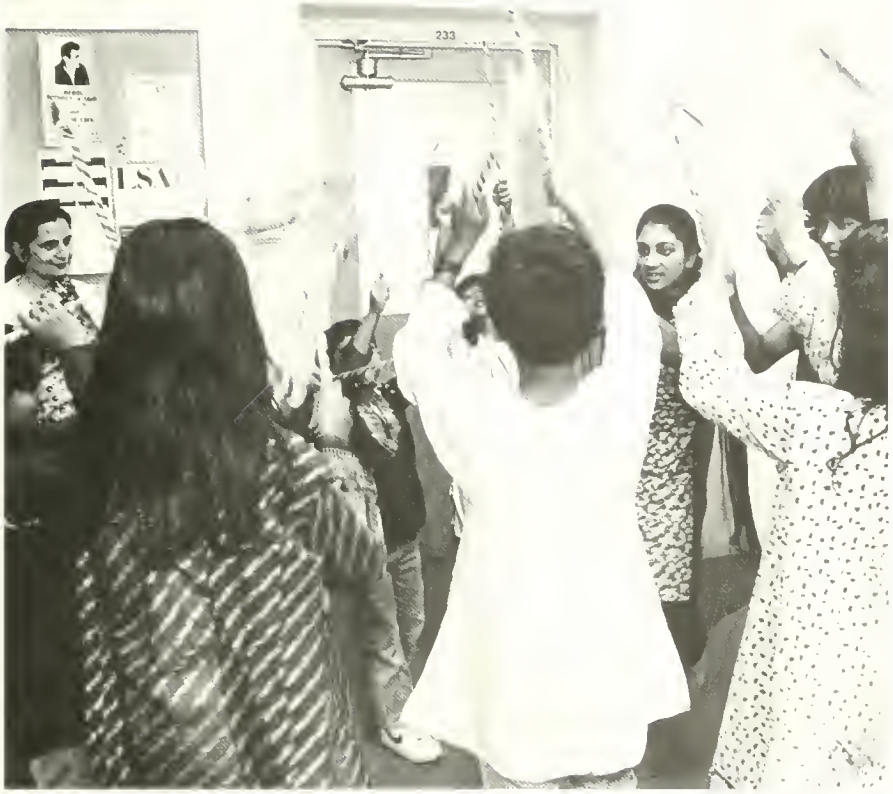
Lazal Mohammed Khan (center) inspects rice crop, circa 1955. Photo courtesy of Mohammed and Bashira Hussain

After completing his degree at Madras Medical College in India, Yellapragada Subba Row came to the United States in 1923 to further his study of tropical diseases. His work in nutrition at Lederle Laboratories, where he became Director of Research, led to important advances in the understanding of vitamin chemistry.

Dr. Subba Row (center) in his laboratory at Pearl River, New York, 1946. Photo courtesy of Lederle Laboratories

a more occupationally and demographically varied community emerged.

Indian Americans now number nearly 400,000 and form the fourth largest Asian community in the United States. As they settle throughout the country and practice a wide variety of occupations, their history turns from the politics of survival to the challenges of contemporary life.



Young Indian Americans draw their identity from both cultures. The new generation, like those before it, strikes the balance between traditions in its own way.

Indian American children learn a Bengali folk dance in preparation for a festival. Berkeley, California, 1982. Photo by Peter Menzel

In 1956 Dalip Singh Saund became the first Asian elected to the United States Congress to represent his southern California district in the House of Representatives. A native of the Punjab and previously a farmer, Saund completed a doctorate in mathematics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1923.

Dr. Saund (right) with wife Marian and Senator John F. Kennedy, circa 1958. Photo courtesy of Marian Saund

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Songs in Circles: Gujaratis in America

by Gordon Thompson

Gordon Thompson has conducted research in Gujarat under grants from the American Institute of Indian Studies and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. He is a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is a lecturer in music at California State University, Long Beach.

The state of Gujarat, on India's western shoreline, is historically known for its textiles and merchants. Gujaratis have also been among South Asia's most skillful seafarers and were the guides for the first Europeans arriving in India's ports. They have plied the waters of the Indian Ocean for more than a millenium and have established settlements in such diverse places as Fiji, Hong Kong and South Africa.

Today, Gujaratis are one of the largest South Asian ethnic groups in the United States. Against a seemingly incongruous southern California backdrop of fast-food restaurants, gas stations and freeways, one night every month as well as once each autumn for nine consecutive nights, Gujarati-Americans congregate in their temples, in high school auditoriums and in community centers to perform songs and circle dances that have survived and flourished wherever Gujaratis have settled.

Performances of *garbā* and *rās* – circle dances accompanied by singing – figure prominently in Gujarati communal worship. Through these forms Gujaratis worship, socialize and reaffirm their heritage. In the United States, despite the variety of their geographic backgrounds, all Gujaratis can participate in these dances which provide, among other things, an opportunity for adolescents and young adults to meet and to discuss common problems and concerns. The dances are also a chance for parents and grandparents to exercise their religious beliefs, to renew old friendships and to relive memories.

Perhaps the more important of the two dances to Gujaratis is garba. During the autumnal festival of Navrātrī ("Nine Nights"), garbā is performed in almost every city, town and village of Gujarati-speaking western India. Hindu (and many Jain) women congregate after sundown to dance and sing until late at night in local courtyards or squares, or sometimes even in cordoned-off streets festooned with lights. Singers and instrumentalists are usually drawn from within the community, but sometimes specialists are hired to help lead and accompany.

Navratri is celebrated in many American cities, although less dramatically than in some parts of Gujarat. At an October 1984 celebration behind the Gujarati community's temple in Norwalk, California, several hundred women and men crowded onto a carpeted parking lot for garba. Similar celebrations took place elsewhere in Los Angeles and Orange Counties on the same night and, just as in Gujarat, some individuals traveled between events to dance, to sing and to socialize.

Traditionally, in the middle of the garba dance area a platform is erected with an image or representation of the community's mother goddess. Figurines found among the ruins of the second millenium B.C. suggest that the worship of mother goddesses in South Asia antedates Hinduism. Some female deities, such as Kali, are pan-Indian and

Navarātri garbā at a temple in Norwalk, California, October, 1984. Photo by Gordon Thompson

worshipped in regions other than western India. Goddesses like Khodiyār are more provincial and thus evoke local themes.

When garbā is performed, the mother goddess is represented in a lithograph or by some symbol of her power – possibly a pot or a lamp. On rare occasions, the spirit of a mother goddess may possess a dancer or dancers; because the hypnotic repetition of steps and music by dancers moving in a circle sometimes for hours gives garbā a certain mesmerizing nature, it is not surprising that dancers can succumb to a trance-like state.

For the dance a special costume worn by some women consists of a short blouse (*cholī* or *odhanī*) and a long skirt (*chaniyā* or *ghāgharo*). These are sometimes embroidered with silver thread and composed of strips of brightly colored silk and may also have small circular mirrors stitched into the pattern. In some garbā performance traditions, women dance with small pots or lanterns on their heads; more rarely, males may dance carrying a scaffold adorned by small lamps.

Traditionally, the dancers were the singers and were led by a senior woman who selected the songs, texts, dance steps and their tempo. Today, because garbā celebrations are larger, sound amplification is often used. Singers and dancers are now separate groups, each led by a different woman. However, the basic dance steps remain simple, and the separation of singing and dancing roles has not diminished the popularity of the genre.

The choreography for garbā is based on a cycle of four steps and a hand clap. In the most popular version of the dance, the devotee takes three steps forward and on the fourth, bends and claps towards the center of the circle. Taking a step towards the outside, the dancer singer repeats the pattern.

The music is organized into a call-and-response pattern. The woman leading the dance sings the identifying chorus of the garba, and others repeat it. The leader then sings the first verse, is again echoed by the others, and starts the process over again with the identifying chorus before proceeding to the second verse.

The melody and dance steps are economical, allowing attention to be focused on the texts, which generally praise the mother goddesses and recount stories about them. As garbā is most often performed only by women, some texts describe the plights of the wife in the joint household.

Musically and choreographically similar to garbā, rās is a sung circle dance performed in Gujarat as well as in other parts of central and western India. Gujarati versions of rās are famous for their vigor and intricacy and for the distinctive use of *dandiyā*, brightly painted and lacquered wooden rods. Each performer holds two dandiyā and, while dancing in a circle, strikes them together and against the dandiyā of other dancers. These complex step and stick patterns are often performed by two concentric circles of dancers interweaving in opposite directions.

Rās is particularly associated with Saurashtra, the peninsular region of Gujarat, and with men of cattle-rearing castes. In the years before India gained independence, these men were also the principal local rulers responsible for the protection of land, livestock and life in their districts. Among the skills required of them was adeptness in hand-to-hand combat — skills which the movements of rās seem to parallel. If dandiyā are pictured as replacing swords, then the movements of the dancers — crossing weapons with one participant, spinning, and then facing the next — suggest the actions of battle.

The relationship between the martial arts and rās is underscored by the medieval *rāso*, a form of epic poetry detailing the lives and battles of western and central India's warrior princes. It is from the rāso that some scholars believe rās has developed.

Today, however, rās is more popularly a women's dance in celebration of one of Gujarat's most famous former residents, Krishna. According to Hindu texts, after the wars of the *Mahābhārata* (a seminal Hindu epic), Krishna and his followers came to live in Saurashtra. There he is said to have taught rās to the women of the cattle herders. In the version known as *rās līlā*, a child imitates Krishna at the center of the circle, while women, who represent the milkmaids of Krishna's childhood home, Vrindavan, dance in a circle around him.

Garbā and rās are examples of music and dance which support communal integrity. In India, these sung circle dances symbolize Gujarat to other Indians; today, on foreign soil, these songs, performed by women and men in moving circles around a communally worshipped figure, represent Gujarti-Americans to other Americans.

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Aditi: A Celebration of Life by Richard Kurin

Aditi: A Celebration of Life, a living exhibition in the National Museum of Natural History (June 4 to July 28, 1985), is linked to the Festival of American Folklife both administratively and conceptually. Celebrating the life cycle of traditional India from the perspective of the growing child, the exhibition is organized in 18 sections, beginning with the coming of age, and proceeding through betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, birth, infancy, childhood and maturation to the stage when the child is ready to move out beyond the village to begin yet another cycle. The last section of the exhibition is devoted to festivals and fairs (*melās*) – events which integrate the child into the larger social and cultural community of which he is part. Melā: An Indian Fair at the Festival of American Folklife is, in effect, an enlargement of this section and a living demonstration of its message.

Aditi combines some 1500 contemporary and ancient artifacts with 40 craftspeople and performers in a setting suggestive of an Indian village. Throughout the sections of the exhibition, objects associated with the particular stage of the life cycle are presented together with the folk artists who give them meaning – the dancers, singers, musicians, puppeteers, painters, potters, jugglers and acrobats of India. The juxtaposition of artists from diverse regions of the country with objects of varied temporal and geographic provenance suggests thematic unities as well as continuities of form and function. Thus Aditi views Indian culture not as an atomistic collection of catalogued objects and traditions, but as an integrated and vital pattern for living.

The exhibition derives its name from the ancient mother goddess extolled in the Rig Veda some 3,000 years ago. The Sanskrit word *aditi* denotes the original creative power – abundant, joyful and unbroken – that sustains the universe. This creative power, which implies the joy of doing – the joy of a mother nurturing her child or of a craftsman imparting form to a lump of clay – is demonstrated by the folk artists who give life to the Aditi exhibition.

Abundance is illustrated in the hundreds of terra cotta Ayanar horse figures sculpted by M. Palaniappan to be used as guardian deities in the villages of Tamil Nadu. Joy is obvious in the serious yet glowing face of Balraj Shetty, a juggler from Andhra Pradesh, who travels the countryside amusing children with his versatile manipulations, all the time conveying to them the graceful movements of the gods Krishna and Hanuman.

The unbroken nature of the original creative power is illustrated by the skill of Ganga Devi, who, like other women from the Mithila region of Bihar, learned to design the poignant wall paintings and paint their delicate lines from her mother and maternal grandmother. And the parallel between the nurturance of artistic skill and the family can be observed in the performances of *Bhopa* scroll balladeers from Ra

At Shadipur Depot, outside Delhi, Bhopa balladeer Ram Karan, his wife Goth Devi, and his sons Shish Ram and Kailash, and Harji Lal perform before a scroll that depicts the story of the Rajput warrior, Pabuji. Photo by Daphne Shuttleworth.

Langa musicians from Rajasthan traditionally sing at births and weddings. The two boys, here pictured with their uncles, were trained by Ala ud din and Siddque, participants in the 1976 Festival of American Folklife. Photo by Richard Kurin.

Suggested reading

Jayakar, Pupul. *The Earthen Drum*. New Delhi: National Museum, 1980.

Kramrisch, Stella. *Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribe and Village*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968.

Mark, Mary Ellen. "Sidewalk Sideshows." *Geo*, January, 1981.

Sandal, Veenu. "India's Traditional Folk Artists Fight for a Place in the Future." *Smithsonian Magazine* 16(3)(1984): 44–53.

Aditi: The Living Arts of India. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985.

Suggested films

Aditi. 30 min. color sound. Inter London Educational Association.

The Magical Road Show. 58 min. color sound. BBC Enterprises.

The Sacred Horses of Tamil Nadu. 30 min. color sound. BBC Enterprises.

jasthan: against the backdrop of a hand-painted scroll whose panels illustrate the epic story of the medieval Rajput hero, Pabuji, Ram Karan plays the stringed *rāvanhatta*, sings and dances. His wife, Gotli Devi, sings and illuminates the relevant scroll panel with her lamp, while his nine-year-old son, Shish Ram, looking up at his father in an effort to imitate his movements and learn the songs, in turn directs the dance movements of his younger brother, Kailash, age four. No scholarly treatise could better illustrate the means by which knowledge is traditionally transmitted and the role of family relationships in that process than the look on the faces between father and son, between older and younger brother.

Indian society has undergone dramatic change in this century and will continue to do so at an accelerating rate. To folk artists such changes pose great challenges, for the traditional patron/client relationships of India's *jajmāni* system, upon which so many folk artists depend, have been disrupted. For some, like the Langa musicians of Rajasthan, this has spawned a search for new patrons, particularly institutional ones — schools, hotels, radio stations and government agencies. As the century progresses, demand for more technologically sophisticated products strains the economic viability of traditional enterprise. Where Krishnagar toymaker Subir Pal may take hours to complete a realistic clay model, modern commercial machinery can turn out thousands of plastic mold figures in the same amount of time. Such changes not only mark challenges for the folk artists themselves but signal the disruption of the social order and culture upon which they traditionally depended and which, through their art, they perpetuate.

While the Aditi exhibition raises the question of how traditional folk artists adapt to contemporary circumstances, by its very existence it suggests one answer. Many of the performers in both Aditi and the Mela now reside in Shadipur Depot in New Delhi and are members of a cooperative called the "Forgotten and Scattered Artists." It is a tribute to their collective talent, skill and fortitude, as well as to the genius of Aditi's creator, Rajeev Sethi, that these artists are neither forgotten nor scattered. With dramatic, yet dignified resolve, they raise the problems faced by folk artists not only in India but throughout the world today.

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